

DISSERTATIONS

O N

BIBLE PRINCIPLES;

O R,

TRULY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES AND DUTIES:

AND ON THAT

DIVINE LIGHT AND EVIDENCE

WITH WHICH THESE STAND CLOTHED

ALL OVER THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

CONTAINING ALSO A FEW PAGES ON

MAGISTRACY AS THE ORDINANCE OF GOD.

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Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. i. 13.

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. v. 21.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Book is humbly, seriously, and devoutly intended to do justice to holy Scripture, honour to the religion of Jesus, and good to precious and immortal souls.

May the God of love, and of all grace and truth, for Christ's sake, bless it abundantly for these noble ends and divine purposes; and every intention of the author, whether with respect to others or himself, will be fully served.

PREFACE

THIS Book is chiefly, for the use of
decently intended to be given to
holy scripture, bound to the region of
Judas, and good to precious and immortal
souls.

May the God of love and of all grace
and truth, for Christ's sake, be
glorified in the hearts of all who
peruse, and every minister of the
gospel, whether of a word or of a
himself will be glorified.

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DISSER.

DISSERTATIONS, &c.

B O O K I.

UPON THE BEING, PERFECTIONS, CHARACTER, AND DECREES OF GOD.

C H A P. I.

Upon the Being of God.

AS the Bible, the book of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures, is by the very institution and appointment of the Son of God himself, and indeed all the authority of heaven, at once the religion, and all the religion of Christians. For it was all given by Him, through the Holy Ghost, whether by means of prophets in the Old, or apostles and evangelists in the New, Testament. John i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him." 2 Pet. i. 21. "For the prophecy, (viz of scripture) came not in old time, or at any time, by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

So it contains a full, a perfect, and compleat revelation of the mind and will of God to men for their salvation; a full, a perfect, and compleat rule, and indeed the one and only rule both of faith and manners to all Christians. Psal. xix. 7, 11. Isa. viii. 20. Jer. xv. 16. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Accordingly the Holy Scriptures infallibly and unanswerably demonstrate (wherever they come and are known) to all
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the world, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only Law-giver in his church, and indeed to the universe; that he is a perfect Law-giver, and the sole Lord of the consciences of all men. And so that all true wisdom is taught and only to be learned, by any sinner of mankind, at the school of Christ. And, therefore, that it is an act of native obedience, and due allegiance, all Christians owe to the Son of God to acknowledge him as such. Jam. iv. 12. Matt. xxiii. 8, 12. Rom. xiv. 4.

Thus the holy apostle Paul, being now Paul the aged, and also prisoner at Rome, for the love and sake of Jesus, and nigh his triumphant death, as a martyr in the cause of Christ, and of genuine Christianity, in his 2d epistle to Timothy, the last of the fourteen books and epistles of the New Testament he wrote, (1 chap. 13 ver.) addresses Timothy the evangelist, as a beloved son, in a manner with his dying breath, his son in the faith of Christ, although not of his flesh; and calls upon him in the name and bowels, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, and with all his authority, to hold fast, and with all his heart and might, that form of sound words, that original plan, draught, pattern, or model of sound and wholesome words, both as to faith and obedience, doctrine and practice, so fully, so gloriously published all over the divine record, the everlasting gospel.

And which, says he, you have particularly and so often heard of me, as an apostle and minister of Christ: Yea, hold all these fast in faith and love, and by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us. Which are stiled, in God's own language, *The truth* as in Jesus. *The words of God*, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. *The doctrine according to godliness*. *The knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Or sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. Eph. iv. 20, 21. John iii. 34. 1 Tim. i. 10, 11; vi. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Tit. i. 15. Heb. vi. 1.

In all the dissertations, we intend, (God willing and assisting) upon the Holy Scriptures in general, it is only to give a summary view of bible principles, or truly christian doctrines and duties; with that divine light and evidence, with which
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these stand clothed all over the book of God. With the manner how, and the reasons why, these principles and doctrines are to be embraced and held fast, and those duties diligently, faithfully, and conscientiously practised by all Christians.

And to begin with the very first principle of reason, revelation, and indeed of all religion, *that God is, and must be*. This is a proposition, which stands divinely and unanswerably demonstrated to all the world, by the all of the word and works of God; insomuch, that any man upon the face of the earth must renounce his reason, as well as give up with the all of revelation and religion, that refuses this first and most essential principle of all things, *That God is*, and that he exists in, and of himself; or, is the only necessary and self-existent being, who gives being and existence to all the creatures, life and happiness to any. And without this single, essential, and first principle of all things, how shall all the wisdom or philosophy of this world account for any thing? And, therefore, Almighty God *is, and must be*; who is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy and happy in, and of himself; and who made all things for himself; who at first spoke, and the world arose; the mighty, the stupendous fabric of the universe, stood forth in all its symmetry, beauty, and perfection. Who made the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all things therein. Who made an innumerable company of holy angels, purely spirits; however the evil angels soon unmade themselves, by their sin and apostacy from God. Who made man a compound both of matter and spirit; formed his body of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life; and man became a living soul, as designed of God to be properly allied to both worlds; both to this visible and material one, and also to the spiritual, invisible, and eternal world.

As likewise an innumerable variety of creatures, purely material; as all the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea; with all the other parts of the creation, all over the universe, whether animate, or inanimate. Thus the very first sentence in all the book of God is, "In the beginning (viz. of time) God created the heavens and the earth,"

earth," Gen. i. 1. says Moses, the man of God. For all the gods of the nations are idols, nothings, and worse than nothing; but the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, made or created the heavens, says David, the man according to God's own heart, Psal. xcvi. 5. "All things were made by him, and for him (says unerring wisdom and eternal truth) and without him was not any thing made that was made." John i. 1, 3. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. Moreover, the apostle Paul unanswerably demonstrates this divine proposition, *that God is*, both from the word and works of God. Heb. xi. 3, 6. Rom. i. 19, 20.

C H A P. II.

Upon the Perfections, Character, and Unity of God.

BUT what he is, and that he is a spirit, a pure spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. The Supreme Being, at once possessed of every divine perfection and excellency, as the Almighty Creator, great Sovereign, and sole Proprietor and Governor of the universe, is equally obvious from all he has either said or done, as that *he is*. Exod. iii. xiv. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you;" that is, he is the ever-blessed and adorable Jehovah; the uncreated fountain of being and of all bliss; the only necessary and self-existent being, infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy, and happy in, and of himself; with whom saying is doing; and who only gives being and existence to all other beings or creatures whatever.

He is possessed of infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness alone; of self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency only. His wisdom is infinite, as well as his being, essence, and existence, and also unerring; as the all of his word, works, and ways declare and fully shew. His power is almighty and irresistible. Who only spoke, and the worlds arose with all
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their hosts; and who, with the same infinite ease, every moment upholds, rules, and governs them. His goodness, his love, mercy, and grace, are all boundless, and peculiar to deity.

His justice is essential and inexorable; his holiness is infinitely pure and spotless; and the very lustre, and glory, or shine, of all the divine perfections. His truth is inviolable, eternal, and unalterable as himself. And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." John iv. 24. Job xi. 7. xxvi. 14. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Deut. xxxii. 4. Psa cxlv. 17. clxvii. 5. lxxxvi. 15. xxxi. 19. xc. 1, 2. Isa. vi. 3. xl. 12, 15, 25, 28. Rom. xi. 33, 36. 1 John iv. 8, 16. Rev. iv. 8.

But as the great and gracious Sovereign of the universe, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, the one only living and true God, the Lord Jehovah, is thus omniscient and omnipotent, omnipresent, self-sufficient and all-sufficient, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his nature and essence, his being and perfections, it is evident, as the very light of the sun at noon, or even to demonstration itself, both from scripture and reason, that there can be but one such being in the world, one such God in the universe. Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," one Jehovah, Mark xii. 29. Jesus, infinitely greater than Moses, wiser than Solomon, and possessed of all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge whatever; the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, tells the Jewish ruler, employed by the rest of them, to ask him a question, Which is the first and great commandment in the law? The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, one Jehovah; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength; this is the first and great commandment." And the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; there is none other commandments greater than these, and on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Mark xxii. 37, 40.

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The apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Jer. x. 10, "But the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, is the true God, or the God of truth. He is the living God, and an everlasting King, or the King of eternity."

C H A P. III.

Upon God and the Holy Trinity.

BUT that there is a trinity of persons in this unity, or *oneness* of divine nature and essence; or three distinct characters, and personal subsistencies, called, in God's own stile and language, the Father, the Son or *Word*, and the Holy Ghost, in this one godhead, deity, or divine nature. He that runs may read all over the sacred page. And, surely, an all-wise, an infinitely good and gracious God can only, properly, and fully say, what and how he is. And neither man nor angel can assign the least shadow of a reason, why we and all mankind besides are not, or ought not to take God's account of himself, his divine and super-excellent self, his infinite self. For if the least act, word, or work of God is more than a match for all creature-wisdom, whether in man or angel, as the man according to God's own heart, the sweet singer of Israel, fully shews, when he says, Psa. cvi. 2, "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?" That is, fully no creature can, God himself only can do it.

And if no man living can certainly and fully say, what is really good or best for him in this life, and God himself is the only, perfect, and infallible judge even of this; as the wise Solomon shews, Eccl. vi. 12, "For who knoweth what is good for a man in this life, all the days of his vain life,

life, which he spendeth as a shadow?" how shall either man or angel be ever able fully to say what God is? How shall we, or any sinner of mankind, know any thing of God, but by his own divine teaching? How shall we know any thing of him, to the saving of our souls, but by the teaching of his word and works, accompanied with the power of his grace and spirit?

Thus God himself tells us in his word, 1 John v. 7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." Matth. iii. 16, 17. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. Luke ix. 35. John x. 30. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Thus that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and yet but one and the same only living and true God; the same in substance or essence, equal in perfection, power, and glory; although three distinct persons or characters in this one simple or undivided divine nature and essence, stands unanswerably demonstrated all over the holy scriptures. What by the personal acts and properties, the joint names, titles, attributes and perfections, works and worship, which are all peculiar to deity; being constantly, invariably, and uniformly ascribed to each of these sacred three; three in one, and one in three all over the divine record, the living oracles of this one, only, living, and true God,—as the following passages of holy scripture fully shew, Heb. i. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8. John i. 1, 2, 3. xiv. 18. xv. 26. Gal. iv. 6. Gen. i. 26, 27. Exod. iii. 14. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. 1 John v. 7, 20. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Acts v. 3, 4. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Jer. xxiii. 6. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Matth. iii. 16, 17.

C H A P. IV.

Upon the Fore-knowledge and Decrees of God.

THAT this Almighty Creator, great Sovereign, sole Proprietor, and Governor of the universe, is infinite and unerring in wisdom and knowledge; and so possessed of full
 prescience

prescience, perfect fore-knowledge of all persons and things or events in time, or to endless ages, even from eternity before time; yea, that his eye at once pervades the universe, and penetrates the whole circle of beings; insomuch, that all things from eternity before time, through time, and to eternity, when time shall be no more, are ever under his all-seeing eye in one continued view, appears evident from all he has either said or done, or promised to do; and this, all that know any thing either of a God or a Bible, must allow. Thus the apostles and elders assembled at Jerusalem, upon a very important occasion, the liberty and freedom of Christians, in and by the Son of God, from Moses and the law, with its burdensome ceremonies; in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, amongst other great matters, attest this grand fact, this glorious truth of God. Acts xv. 18. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world." 2. Tim. ii. 19. Isa. xii. 5. xxviii. 29. xlii. 9, 10. Psa. cxxxix. 6. cxlvii, 5.

With this doctrine of the divine prescience or fore-knowledge of Almighty God, stands connected in a manner all over the holy scriptures, the doctrine of the divine decrees. Which doctrine is constantly, invariably, and uniformly published by God in his word, and was also ever taught, always known, and believed in the true church of God, as the holy scriptures fully shew; and therefore it is, and must be, a doctrine every way like and worthy of God.

Which decrees of God are just the eternal purpose of his all-discerning mind; by which, according to his own sovereign will and pleasure, and for his own glory, he, with infinite ease, determined, finally determined as to all persons, things, or events, whether in time or to eternity: Or, in other words, predestinated, or fore-ordained, whatsoever thus comes to pass. For he always was, is, and ever will be, God in all he does. Gen. xviii. 25. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Psa. xxxiii. 11. Isa. xlii. 9, 10, 12. v. 28, 29. Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, 11. Rom. viii. 29, 30. xi. 2. Acts xv. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

And as the Lord Jesus Christ, as both God and man in one person, as mediator and Saviour, and as thus the chosen, the

the called, the sent, and the sealed of God; is the prime constitution in all the œconomy of God. No doubt, he was thus as God in the likeness of man, as the very and eternal Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh; as the first born of every creature, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and heir of all things, yea both as a suffering and an exalted Prince and Saviour; the very first and prime elect, or primary object of this eternal purpose in the all-discerning mind of God. Isa. xlii. 1. Psa. lxxxix. 19. Job xxxiii. 24. Acts ii. 23. iv. 27, 28. 1 Pet. i. 18, 21. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23. 45, 49, 57.

Accordingly all the elect of God from among mankind were chosen of God, of God the Father, or by the joint act of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as God; expressed in the person of the Father, from eternity before time, in Jesus Christ the Son of God, his eternal, only-begotten, and well-beloved Son, as Mediator and Saviour; according to his own sovereign will and good pleasure, and for his own glory; to gospel obedience, holiness, and salvation, eternal life and happiness, everlasting salvation, in and by Jesus Christ alone; through the blood of sprinkling, which is the blood of Christ, the sanctification of the spirit, and the belief of the truth. Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, 11. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2, 3, 4, 5. Heb. xii. 24. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, 7. Gal. iii. 16. Rom. v. 15. Titus iii. 4, 7. John iii. 16. 1 John 5, 11, 12. Tit. ii. 11, 14.

And it would appear, all the elect angels were also thus chosen in him, from eternity, as Mediator and Saviour, of the sovereign will and good pleasure of Almighty God, and for his glory; and were likewise taken as menial servants into his service, in that amiable and glorious character; in this eternal purpose of the all-discerning mind of God, although they stood in no need of a Saviour, like sinners of mankind, having never sinned.

As they are all now confirmed by him in all their holiness and happiness for a creature-state; as such, would have been still subject to change. 1 Tim. v. 21. Heb. i. 6, 7, 8, 14. Eph. i. 10, 11, 12, 19, 23. Luke xx. 36. 1 Pet. i. 12. iii. 22.

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Thus

Thus the elect of mankind, so often mentioned, so fully, so particularly described in the holy scriptures at large, said to be given by the Father to the Son, viz. in his eternal purpose and grace in Christ, to be redeemed by him in time, to be chosen in him, and ordained to eternal life, &c. are in other words, all such of mankind, Jew or Gentile, or of whatever nation, tongue, or kindred, upon the face of God's earth, as ever did, do, or shall in good earnest come to God the Father in the Son, by the Spirit, according to the word of God; or obtain mercy, and find grace, special mercy, and saving grace in the sight of God the Father, in and through the Son of his love and bosom. John xiv. 6, 13, 14. vi. 37, 44. xvii. 11. Matth. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi. 9, 13. Acts xiii. 48. James i. 6, 7. 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

As to the elect, or non-elect, whether of angels or of men, this is, and only can be, known to God; until it appear to angels by their confirmation, to sinners of mankind by their effectual calling and conversion to Christ, and genuine Christianity. Acts xv. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Deut. xxix. 29. 2 Pet. i. 10. Tit. ii. 11, 14. iii. 4, 7. Phil. iii. 8, 16. 1 Cor. ix. 24. Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Thus all mankind, sinners whatever, without exception or distinction, wherever the gospel of the grace of God comes, and is known according to this eternal purpose and grace of God, as in Christ, towards all that come to him in good earnest, in his Son, in time, as well as by the divine appointment all over the word of God, are invited, called, and commanded to come to Jesus Christ, as revealed and published in the gospel, as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation. John iii. 16, 36. 1 John v. 11, 12. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Thes. v. 9, 10. Prov. viii. 4. Isa. lv. 1, 7. Matt. xi. 28, 30. 1 John iii. 23. Rev. xxii. 17.

Thus the all of the doctrine of the divine decrees, as well as the all of the mind and will of God, as revealed in the word of his grace, fully shews us, and all the world besides, that duty is always man's, both by the divine purpose and appointment, and that grace and events are always God's. As the great Sovereign, Almighty Creator, sole Proprietor,
and

and supreme Ruler and Governor of the universe ; as also that the all of the works of God, whether in Creation, Providence, or Redemption, in time, or even to eternity, are the constant, the invariable, and uniform execution of these divine purposes. Gen. xviii. 25. Job xxiii. 13, 14. xii. 14. Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 14. Isa. xii. 5. xxviii. 29. xli. 9, 10. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. viii. 29, 30. xi. 33, 36.

Thus these many passages of holy scripture, and indeed the whole book of God, for it is in a manner all over the whole history of God as well as man, fully shew us, and all mankind, that God always was, is, and ever will be God, in all he either says or does ; and with respect to man, that all the world of mankind put together, cannot speak the least word of plain common sense against, or find the least real fault in whatever an infinitely wise, good, and gracious God has either said or done.

Thus Abraham, the father of the faithful, and friend of God, says, Gen. xviii. 25, " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? "

Job, that sage in experience, and mirror of patience, says, Job xxiii. 13, 14, " He is in one mind, and who can turn him ? Whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doth. He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him. " The wise Solomon says, " I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it ; and God doth it that men should fear before him, " Eccl. iii. 14. As likewise, " In the day of prosperity be joyful ; but in the day of adversity consider ; God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him, " Eccl. vii. 14.

The great apostle Paul asks any man living disposed thus to quarrel with his maker, Rom. ix. 20. " Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? " Can any thing be more foolish, absurd, or impious if he should ?

Thus it is evident, from these premisses, that election, or non-election, neither is, nor can be, the cause, either of salva-

tion or damnation ; but the pure love, rich, free, and sovereign grace and tender mercy of God as in Christ, is the sole moving cause, both of election, and the all of salvation, by Jesus ; and sin the sole procuring cause of damnation, whether in man or angel. John iii. 16. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Rom. v. 12. vi. 23. John v. 40. Matth. xxiii. 37. Jude ver. 6.

Accordingly the all of the doctrine of the decrees of God, as well as the word of God in general, considers man as a reasonable being, a rational and an intelligent creature, and lays no man under the least necessity of being either good or bad. But if the great Sovereign of the universe saw meet, for wise and holy reasons, to permit sin either in man or angel, why might he not purpose from eternity to punish it as a righteous judge, as well as do it at last in the general judgment? Gen. xviii. 25. Acts xvii. 31. 1 Cor. x. 15. Rom. v. 12. vi. 1, 2. xi. 23. xii. 1, 2. Psal. ix. 17. Isa. xlviii. 22. And, therefore, there neither is, nor can be, any thing in all this, either unlike or unworthy of God. Rom. ix. 20. xi. 33. Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 14, 29. Job xi. 7. Isa. xlv. 9, 10.



B O O K II.

THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE UNIVERSE, AND THE TWO COVENANTS, BOTH OF WORKS AND GRACE, CONSIDERED.

C H A P. I.

Upon the Plan both of Creation and Redemption.

BUT to proceed; as the Lord Jesus Christ, as both God and man in one person, as Mediator and Saviour, is evidently (as has been hinted already) the prime constitution in all the œconomy of God; the very first and prime elect, or primary object of the above eternal purpose in the all-discerning mind of God; so the general plan of all the works of God, whether of creation or providence, in heaven or earth, seems to have been laid in him, in the amiable and gracious, the grand and glorious, and divinely endearing character of Emmanuel; God with us; God in our nature; God in, with, and amongst men.

Thus he is styled in God's own language: The beginning of the creation of God; the first-born of every creature; the first and the last; head over all things to his church. And it is also said, "that the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand; that all things were made for him, as well as by him." And, that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him. Col. i. 15, 19. Rev. i. 8, 11. xxi. 6. xxii. 13. John iii. 35. Eph. i. 9, 10, 13, 23. Phil. ii. 9, 10.

But whatever was in this, we are certain, by the divine record, by all the authority of God and of his Christ, all the authority of heaven, that the grand plan of grace, of eternal life and happiness, or of everlasting salvation, for any

any sinner of mankind, was only laid in *Him*, in the eternal purpose and rich grace of God as in Christ.

And that this divinely grand, gracious, glorious, and godlike plan of grace, of eternal life, and everlasting salvation, for any Saviour of mankind, was thus only laid in him, in the character of Mediator and Saviour, as both God and man in one person; and so every way able to support all the rights of the Deity; the Godhead on the one hand, with all the interests and concerns of all his people on the other. As at once the glorious medium of intercourse between heaven and earth; the sole and the blessed mean of all actual and saving communion and fellowship between God and men; the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation. John iii. 16. i. 14. xiv. 6. vi. 37. 1 John iv. 10. v. 11, 12. Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, 11. 1 Tim. ii. 5. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. ii. 11, 12. iii. 4, 7. Job xxxiii. 24. Psal. lxxxix. 19. ciii. 17. Jer. xxxi. 3. Gal. iii. 16. Rom. iv. 16. 2 Cor. i. 20. 1 John ii. 25.

C H A P. II.

Upon Christ and the Covenant of Grace.

AND so that the all of this eternal life, and everlasting happiness and salvation, was only to be conveyed to and conferred upon any sinner of mankind, in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the way of the covenant of grace. That new, that everlasting, and well-ordered covenant; the one and only covenant of life and peace for any sinner of mankind; the one and only covenant, in the way of which any sinner of all Adam's race, in and through the Son of God, ever since the covenant of works was broken in Paradise, could deal with God, either with safety or comfort.

And which runs in these terms all over the Holy Scripture: "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." I will be your God in Christ, in covenant, and ye shall be my people, my sons and daughters in him, saith the Lord
God

God Almighty, the Lord of Hosts. Which covenant was made from eternity, in the counsels of peace betwixt the Father and the Son, with the Lord Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; the Surety, the Substitute, the Covenant-Head, and Representative of all his people; the living and life-giving Head to, and the foundation and center of, the whole new creation; and in him, with all his spiritual and respective seed, as such. John iii. 16. xiv. 6. vi. 37. i. 12, 13. Gal. iii. 16. Rom. iv. 16. 2 Cor. i. 20. Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, 28. Psal. xl. 7, 8. ci. 5, 9. Isa. xlii. 1, 5, 6, 7. Isa. 49. 6, 8. liv. 10. lv. 3. lvi. 4, 6. Acts iii. 25. Zech. vi. 13. ix. 11. Heb. viii. 6, 10. 2 Cor. vi. 18, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, 11. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 4, 7. John xiv. 19. Heb. xii. 24. xiii. 28, 21.

C H A P. III.

Upon Creation, Providence, and Redemption.

ACCORDINGLY the all of the works of God, whether of creation, providence, or redemption by Jesus Christ, being, as has been said, the constant, the uniform, and invincible execution of God's eternal purpose and divine decrees. Eph. i. 11. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Eccl. iii. 14. Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. So Moses, the man of God, tells us, Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning," viz. of time, "God created the heavens and the earth." And so proceeds to give us a full, particular, and distinct account of the creation of all things, so far as infinite wisdom and goodness saw necessary, to promote the glory of the great Creator; and the instruction, comfort, edification, and happiness of man.

And particularly how God, with infinite ease, made all things of nothing by the word of his power, or by his will or word, in the space of six days; and all very good, and for his own glory. Gen. i. chap. at large. ii. 1. Heb. xi. 3. Rom. i. 19, 20. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9, 11. Prov. xvi. 4. 1 Cor. x. 31. John i. 1, 2. Moses does not tell us expressly on which day the angels were made

made, neither is it necessary for us to know : But it is most likely, from his account and other circumstances, they were made the first day. They were all made pure spirits, holy, immortal, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, great in strength, to do God's will, fulfil his pleasure, and shew forth his glory. But their creature-state, as such, still made them subject to change, until all the good angels were confirmed in all their holiness and happiness by Jesus Christ, as Mediator. Gen. i. 1. ii. 1. Job xxxviii. 4, 7. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. Eph. i. 21, 22. 1 Tim. v. 21. Psal. civ. 4, 5. ciii. 20, 21. Matt. xxii. 30. xxv. 31. 2 Sam. xiv. 17. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. Heb. i. 6, 8. xii. 22. With respect to all the evil angels, however, they were holy and happy, as well as the other angels of God, as they dropt from his all-forming hand : Yet being still subject to change, by their creature-state, as such, and permitted of God, according to his own sovereign will and pleasure, and for wise and holy reasons, in pure and holy sovereignty. For which, all creature-wisdom cannot otherwise assign the least shadow of a reason. They soon unmade themselves by their sin and apostacy from God, which was entirely their own voluntary act and deed ; and therefore their sin, with all the punishment due to it, only does, and indeed only can, lye at their own door. Heb. ii. 16. Hab. ii. 20. Gen. iii. 14, 15. xviii. 25. Jude, verse 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Rom. ix. 20. Acts xvii. 31.

C H A P. IV.

Upon the Creation of Man, a little World.

BUT with respect to mankind, the first man, Adam, and also Eve, the first woman, and mother of all-living, Moses, the man of God, tells us, both how and when they were made. After the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had spoke, and the world arose, the mighty, the stupendous fabric of the universe stood forth in all its symmetry and perfection ; yea, after he had stretched out the heavens as

a glorious canopy over the head of man when he should be made, spread out the earth as a verdant, flowery carpet below his feet, the sea as a molten looking-glass before him, and stored the world with an innumerable variety of creatures for his use; and planted the garden of Eden, as a place of business, pleasure, and delight, for his reception and employment; God said, the Elohim said, God the Son said to God the Father and the Holy Ghost, the sacred Three, Three in One, and One in Three, said, it would appear, by the Son, "Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Gen. i. 26, 27, 28. Isa. xlv. 8, 12. Col. i. 15, 16, 17. iii. 10. Thus he made man on the sixth day of the creation. He formed his body of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul: And soon it would appear, the same day, he made woman, of a rib taken from his side; because she was to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh: Yea, they were to be one spirit as well as body, as joined by God himself in the holy estate of marriage, even in Paradise. Gen. i. 27. ii. 1. vii. 21, 24. Heb. iii. 4. Thus Adam and Eve were made as the last and finishing part of the creation of God. Gen. i. 26, 28. ii. 1, 2, 7, 21, 24. For that all things in the first creation were made by Jesus Christ. And that he still upholds, rules, and governs the world, and does whatsoever pleaseth him all over the universe, is evident from the word of God. John i. 1, 3. Col. i. 15, 17. Heb. i. 1, 2, 3, 8. Rev. iv. 11. Matt. xxviii. 18. Eph. i. 20, 23. iii. 9. Rom. xi. 36. Dan. iv. 35. Psal. cx. 1, 2, 3. xxxiii. 6. Acts xvii. 24. But as the all of the works of God in the first creation were thus just the execution of his eternal purpose as to these things; and God was evidently

dently thus God in all he did: So unerring wisdom and eternal truth, that can never be mistaken, that can neither deceive nor be deceived, declared, that they were all very good. Gen. i. 1, 31. ii. 1. Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 29. Psal. cxlv. 17. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Gen. xviii. 25.

C H A P. V.

Upon a general Providence.

BUT as the grand volume of the whole first creation was just the execution of God's eternal purpose, so likewise the all of the acts and works of his holy, wise, all-powerful, adorable, and divine Providence; and especially the grand, the gracious, the glorious, and godlike work of man's redemption, by Jesus Christ alone, are all constantly the object, invariably and uniformly the execution of his eternal purpose.

Or, as the great apostle, Paul, in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, expresses this truly great and divine matter, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, or according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us, in Christ Jesus, before the world began. Eph. i. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Acts ii. 22. 24. iv. 27, 28. Gen. xviii. 25. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 14, 29. Psal. cxlv. 17. Rev. iv. 8, 11. Thus the doctrine of divine Providence stands divinely illustrated, yea, even unanswerably demonstrated, all over the word and works of God.

For the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all, (Psal. ciii. 19) says David, the man according to God's own heart. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? says our blessed Lord and Saviour, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows; in patience possess ye your souls. Matt. x. 29, 31. Luke xii. 6, 7. xxi. 19.

As

As to what divine Providence is, in few words, it is just God's upholding and preserving, his ruling and governing all his creatures, and all their actions. Conservation and sustentation, or God's upholding and preserving all his creatures, is, as it were, a continued creation. It is at least a constant, a continued display of creating power; that wisdom, power, and goodness of Almighty God, which gave being and existence to all the creatures at first, spoke them into being, made them of nothing, by his will, word, or power.

His ruling and governing all his creatures, and all their actions; yea, his over-ruling even sin, the greatest evil, whether in man or angel, to his own glory, is equally the act and work of God, and peculiar to Deity. Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 17. Dan. iv. 35. Psal. ciii. 19. cx. 1, 2, 3. Acts ii. 22, 24. iv. 27, 28. xvii. 24, 28. That there is such a divine Providence, which extends to all God's creatures and all their actions, is equally obvious.

As first, from the nature of God, whose wisdom is infinite; his goodness, boundless; his power, almighty; his truth, eternal. And therefore an all-wise, an infinitely good and gracious, and all-powerful God, will support and over-rule all his creatures, until they have served their end. Deut. xxxii. 4. Psal. xxxvi. 6, 7. cxix. 68. cxlv. 9.

The Nature of the Creatures.

The most simple and native idea we can possibly form of a creature, any creature ever God made, necessarily includes in it, a constant and entire dependence upon God, at all times, for all things; who giveth to all life and breath, and all things; and in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Acts xvii. 25, 28.

Moreover, the doctrine of divine Providence is wrote, as with the sun itself, in a manner all over the book of God, and extends from the highest creature of God to the lowest; as, Neh. ix. 6. Psal. ciii. 19. lxvi. 7. Matt. vi. 30. x. 29, 30, 31. Dan. iv. 35. Acts xvii. 24, 28. Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. Rev. iv. 11.

To the most free and voluntary action of man, Prov. xxi. 1.

To the most casual and accidental thing with man, 2 Chron. xviii. 33. Prov. xvi. 33.

To the selling of Joseph, in which God had a gracious and holy hand; but his brethren, a very cruel and wicked one, Gen. xlv. 8; yea, not to multiply examples, of which there are many, and very different in the Holy Scriptures.

The providence of God extended to the most horrid and sinful action that was ever done under the sun, viz. the crucifixion of the Lord of glory; in which God had an infinitely gracious and holy hand in permitting it; an infinitely wise and all-powerful hand in over-ruling it, both to his own glory, the honour of his Son, the praise of free grace, and to the salvation of precious and immortal souls.

But Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, a most sinful and wicked band, Acts ii. 22, 24. iv. 27, 28.

Yea, here the conscience of every man, the consent of all nations, and the very heathens, worshippers of false gods, all jointly give in their voice. Thus, Aristotle says, whatever a pilot is in a ship, a charioteer in a chariot, a leader in a dance, a law-giver in a state, a general at the head of an army,—that God is in the world.

Horace, another heathen, says, “What shall I sing before the wonted praises of the great Parent of the universe? Who governs the affairs of gods and men, the sea, the earth, the world, with all its various seasons; but while the general providence of God stands thus illustrated, yea even demonstrated all over the word and works of God.” “As the Lord Jesus Christ, as God, Man, Mediator, and Saviour, was the prime elect of God,” Isa. xlii. 1. “And the most august object ever the Divine Providence was conversant about,” Heb. v. 5. ix. 9, 11, 14. Matt. viii. 20. As God the Father proclaims once and again by an audible voice from heaven, viz. at his baptism and transfiguration, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.” Matt. iii. 16, 17. Luke ix. 35. 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18.

C H A P. VI.

Upon a special and particular Providence.

SO that there is a special and particular Providence as to all in Christ, in real union, and of one spirit with the Son of God, and that have Christ in them, enthroned and dwelling in their hearts by faith.

Being justified before God by his blood and righteousness, and sanctified by his word and spirit, and so real Saints and sincere Christians, according to the holy scriptures, is abundantly obvious from the following considerations :

As the nature of the thing itself,

The testimony of God in the word,

And the experience of Saints, indeed, with the many living, illustrious, and shining examples of this very thing recorded in the word of God.

The nature of the thing itself shews this ; God as in Christ, is the God and Father of all his Saints, and people in him ; and therefore they are ever warranted to expect all that the relation of a God and Father in Christ imports and includes in it, as the special objects both of grace and Providence. John xx. 17. 1 John iii. 1, 2, 4, 16. Rom. vi. 14. viii. 9, 14, 17. Gal. iv. 4, 7.

The testimony of God in the word unanswerably demonstrates this comfortable and divine doctrine. As when it is said, " I will be your God, your God in Christ, in covenant ; and ye shall be my people, my sons and daughters, saith the Lord ; and I will put my fear in your hearts, and ye shall not depart from me."

" The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance ; set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave. I have engraven thee as on the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me."

O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men !"

" For

“For since the beginning of the world, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, so much as to conceive what God hath prepared for such as love, fear, wait for him, and hope in his mercy, through Christ.”

And herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Jer. xxxii. 38, 41. Heb. viii. 10. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18. Deut. xxxii. 9. Dan. viii. 6. Isa. xlix. 16, lxix. 4. Psa. xxxi. 19. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 1 John iv. 10.

Moreover the many illustrious and shining, the many living and glorious examples of this very thing recorded in the word of God, and abundantly confirmed in the experience of Saints in all ages, unanswerably demonstrates this comfortable and divine doctrine.

As Moses and the people of Israel in Egypt, at the Red Sea, Mount Sinai, and in the wilderness. Deut. iv. 7, 8, 32, 36. xxxii. 9, 12.

Joshua and the same people of God in Canaan. Jos. xxi. 45. xxiii. 14, 15. As Job i. 10, 19, 25, 27. xlii. 5, 6. As both David and Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 15. 2 Chron. vi. 4, 10. Psa. xxviii. 7. xciv. 18.

The church of God in Isaiah's time, and indeed at all times. Isa. xliii. 1, 2. xlix. 13, 16. Gen. xv. 1. xlviii. 16. xlix. 29. Psa. xxxiv. 15. Zech. iv. 10. Hab. iii. 17, 18.

The apostle Paul before Nero in his own particular case, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17; yea in death, as well as in life, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. And in the viii. of the Romans, from the 31st ver. to the close, in his own name, and in the name of all Saints whatever, he thus triumphs in Christ, as over the special objects, both of grace and Providence; What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ

Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again; who is even at the right-hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? The apostle allows and supposes every thing the heart of man can think of or devise. Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, Psa. xliv. 22. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; nay, says the apostle, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

He rejects the consequence with a humble, but holy disdain, with a sovereign contempt. Nay, says he, "In all these things, we are conquerors, more than conqueror's conquerors, even under conquerors over all these things, by Christ in us; yea spiritual and eternal gainers, by means of all these things through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor any thing in either; nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

C H A P. III.

The State of Innocence considered.

BUT with respect to Adam and Eve in innocence, in Paradise, the first parents of all mankind; we have already observed, that it was their distinguished bliss, their peculiar happiness, that they were made in God's image, after his likeness; which image of God, as consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, was concreated with them; which is, and must be, the very glory, the honour, and happiness of a creature, any creature ever God made.

And which image of, or likeness and resemblance to, their Almighty Creator, the great Sovereign of the universe, not only consisted in knowledge in their understandings, righteousness in their wills, and holiness in heart and affection,
but

but in some measure also, it would appear, in their whole man, body as well as soul; in their whole life, natural and animal, as well as spiritual and moral; yea in their whole state and circumstances, as in innocence in Paradise. Gen. i. 26, 31. Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. Heb. ii. 7.

Thus as they dropt from the all-forming hand of God, their hearts were thrones for God their maker; their whole man, soul, body, and spirit, was a temple, or a living habitation of God; and by the Divine appointment and constitution, they were both the first parents and common head of all mankind, and blessed of God as such. Gen. i. 26, 27, 28.

Thus the first man, the first Adam, as God made him in his own image, and after his own likeness, in the same grace of his great Creator, was to be the lord and center of this whole inferior world; and they were to be the mouth of all the other creatures to God. Gen. i. 26, 31. 1 Cor. xv. 45, 49. Psa. lvii. 8.

But this was not all; as thus made, and so highly favoured, in the same grace of the great Sovereign of the universe, they had immediate and actual communion and fellowship with God. They enjoyed God immediately as their great Creator, their constant Preserver, and their gracious Benefactor, in their very frame and constitution; and also in and by means of all they enjoyed and possessed in innocence in Paradise.

And thus another and a special act, both of grace and providence, towards our first parents in innocence, was the institution of a Sabbath.—The seventh day was a Sabbath, from the creation of the world, to the resurrection of Christ; to promote communion with God, the business of religion, and another world; with the holiness and happiness of man, both in this life, and that to come. And especially to promote the glory of the great Creator, as the great and the last end of this sacred institution, as well as all the other works of God; which wise, gracious, and glorious institution of God, was not only clothed with his will and appointment, but divinely sanctioned also both by his own example, in resting from all the works of creation on the seventh day; and al-

so by the moral law, the law of the Ten Commandments, engraven upon the hearts of our first parents as God made them. Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3. Exod. xx. 8, 11.

Another special act, both of grace and providence towards our first parents in innocence, was not only God's planting the garden of Eden for them before they were made, and putting them into it when made, to keep and dress it as a place of business, pleasure, and delight, yea, as a temple for God, as well as an habitation for them, but also instituting marriage even in Paradise for them, for their mutual help, comfort, and consolation, and the propagation of mankind. Gen. i. 26, 30. ii. 7, 10, 18, 25. Heb. xiii. 4. John ii. 1, 2.

But the most special and signal act, both of grace and providence, towards our first parents in innocence, was not only God's thus making them in his own image and after his own likeness, but also graciously condescending to take them into a covenant relation with himself; his entering into a covenant of life with man, upon condition of perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience; promising life to him in case of obedience, which he was every way able to yield; of which the tree of life in the midst of the garden was, it would appear, a constant memorial, a living remembrancer, yea, a sacramental pledge.

But, on the other hand, threatening death, in case of disobedience, of which the tree of knowledge of good and evil also assured him, in like manner, most likely. Gen. ii. 15, 17, And the Lord God took the man Adam, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God, or Jehovah God, commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, or eating thou shalt eat, viz freely and heartily. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; or in dying thou shalt die, that is most certainly die. Gal. iii. 12, and the law is not of faith; but the man that doth them, shall live in them. Rom. x. 5, For Moses describeth righteousness, which is in the law; that the man which doth these things shall live by them. And says our blessed Lord to the

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young man in the gospel, that was for doing all himself, Matt. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, viz. in the way of doing, or by thy own works, keep the commandments. Which was impossible. Which covenant of works was made with Adam in innocence, as a public person, as the common and covenant head and representative of all mankind, that were to descend from him by ordinary generation. He had all their stock in his own hand, held the terms of life and happiness for them, and was every day able to fulfil these terms as God made him. The test or trial of his obedience to the whole law, the whole moral law, the law of the Ten Commandments, considered as a covenant of works, which was the law of his creation, was put upon his obedience to a positive precept, for which he could see no reason but the sovereign will and pleasure of his Almighty Creator, Gen. ii. 16, 17. Which covenant, or sovereign grant of grace, in the great Creator of heaven and earth, the sole Proprietor of the universe, is called the covenant of works; because works or obedience was the condition of it. Obedience to the positive precept, not to eat of the forbidden fruit; as a test, a trial, or full proof, that he continued uniformly, constantly, and invariably in the same act of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience to the whole moral law, as a covenant of works. Gen. ii. 15, 16, 17. Gal. iii. 12. Rom. x. 5. Matt. xix. 17. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49.

Which covenant of works was first revealed to man, and made with Adam in innocence in Paradise, Gen. ii. 16, 17. But the covenant of grace was first made, being made from eternity, before time, in the counsels of peace between the Father and the Son, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; the Surety, the Substitute, the Covenant-head, and Representative of his people. And in him, with all his spiritual and respective seed, as such, Psa. lxxxix. 3, 4. xix. 28. xl. 7, 8. Zech. vi. 13. ix. 11. Isa. xlii. 1. Gal. iii. 16. Rom. iv. 16. Heb. viii. 10. 2 Cor. i. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49.

Which two covenants of works and grace are the only covenants, in the way of which life and happiness were ever so much as possible, or even supposeable, for Adam or any of

his sons. Rom. xi. 6, 3, 20, 21. x. 4, 5. Gal. iii. 10, 12, 21. Matt. xix, 17. Gal. ii. 15, 16, 20. John viii. 36.

C H A P. VIII.

Upon the Fall of Man.

THUS the covenant of works being made with Adam in innocence, as the common and covenant head of all mankind, that were to descend from him by ordinary generation, however able he was to fulfil the condition of the covenant, and the terms of life and happiness for himself, and all his posterity as such.

Yet at the temptation of Satan, with the solicitation of Eve his beloved wife, he soon took of the fruit of the forbidden tree, and did eat. Gen. iii. 6, And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

Thus Adam, by his sin in eating the forbidden fruit, not only wilfully broke God's positive precept, forbidding him to eat of it under pain of death, but virtually the whole moral law, as it was all cloathed with the same authority; the whole law of the Ten Commandments, both engraven upon his heart as God made him, and contained at large in the covenant of works for his use.

And so he for ever lost, marred, and eternally ruined, for any thing that he could do, his own all, and the all also of all he represented, Rom. v. 12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, v. 18. Therefore, as by the offence of one, or one offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, or by one's righteousness, viz. of Christ only, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, v. 19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous, viz. all the respective seeds, as the first and second Adam, Eccl. vii. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright at first; but they have sought out many inventions, 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49.

Thus Adam and Eve had no sooner sinned in eating the forbidden fruit, by the temptation of the devil in the serpent, and sunk themselves and all their posterity into an estate of sin and misery, than they knew that they were naked, and were ashamed; and sought to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden; as being obnoxious to God's justice, odious to his holiness, hopeless and helpless; and, according to the just demerit of their sin, liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. For the wages of sin is death, and even the least sin is of a damning nature; insomuch, that either sin, or the sinner, must be eternally destroyed. Rom. v. 12. vi. 23. Heb. ix. 22. But hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, at it! As the whole first creation was only an introduction to the second and new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord, and that grand, that glorious, and divine plan of grace, of eternal life, and everlasting salvation, as laid in Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, from eternity before time, by the joint act of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was not to be lost, nor miscarry in the least instance! For God is the rock, and his work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment, and praise him; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. And he hath said, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Tit. i. 2. John i. 1, 3. ii. 25. v. 11, 12. Deut. xxxii. 4. Isa. xlv. 9, 10. Zech. vi. 13.

So the Father of mercies, the God of love and of all grace, soon, yea, immediately upon the back of the fall, it would appear, revealed his Son, as a Saviour, to our guilty first parents, as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation: And so as the true tree of life, which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God, of which
that

that in the garden of Eden could never be more than a faint figure at any rate.

As in that famous promise, Gen. iii. 15, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent: Which promise of God, all the saints and people of God, indeed, believed, and lived upon, for about the space of 4000 years before its actual accomplishment in Jesus Christ at Jerusalem.

Thus Adam was driven out of Paradise, to live by faith on the Son of God, as an husbandman; and not by sight and sense, as well as faith, as in Eden. Gen. iii. 9, 19, 22, 24. Thus Adam, by the fall, lost communion with God; died spiritually that very moment he sinned. And spiritual death must have issued in eternal death, if it had not been for the interposition of the Son of God. For they that are far from God must perish, says unerring Wisdom, and eternal Truth itself. Psal. lxxiii. 27.

The glorious image of God, or likeness to, or resemblance of his gracious, great, and glorious Creator, originally engraven upon him, as consisting in knowledge in his understanding, righteousness in his will, holiness in heart and affections, and indeed as adorning the whole man and the whole life, was defaced: His whole nature, soul and body, was corrupted and depraved; insomuch, that he lost all power and ability either to will or to do what was spiritually good; yea, he became averse to all good, and inclined to all evil.

Thus the gold became dim, and the most fine gold was changed with him; And he was subject to natural death at last, and all the miseries of this life. For misery follows sin, as the shadow does the body; yea, natively and necessarily, if God's mercy in Christ prevents it not. Rom. vi. 23. Heb. ix. 22, 26, 28. Thus the first Adam, by his own voluntary act and deed, his sin in eating the forbidden fruit, soon unmade himself, and all he represented, in the eye of God's law, the moral law, which was the law of his creation, considered as a covenant of works.

And hence he, and all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his

his first transgression. Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. Job xiv. 4. Gen. vi. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49.

Thus sin in man, as well as evil in angels, was only permitted of God, and was man's own voluntary act and deed; yea, his choice: And therefore sin, with all the consequences of it, only does, and indeed only can, lye at the sinner's own door. Gen xviii. 25. Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 14, 29. Rom. v. 12. vi. 23. ix. 20. Acts xvii. 31.

C H A P. IX.

The absolute Impossibility of Life and Happiness by the Law, as a Covenant of Works, when once broken, for any of Mankind, Sinners.

AND therefore Adam, as thus fallen from God, and all mankind as in him, and descending from him by ordinary generation, as a sinful, fallen, and apostate creature, are under the wrath and curse of God; under the whole curse of a broken law, considered as a covenant of works: And so now, by nature, in a state of sin and misery indeed; without God, and without hope in the world; spiritually blind and dead; dead in trespasses and in sins; under the guilt of original sin, and all their actual transgressions; children of wrath, under the whole curse of a broken law, a broken covenant; liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever; and utterly unable to extricate or relieve themselves in the least. For the covenant of works once broken, was not so much as capable of a renewal in its very nature. Before Adam, or any of his fallen race, could have re-entered into life and happiness in the way of that covenant, he must have been just as innocent, righteous, and holy as God made him at first, which is impossible for a sinner, whether man or angel.

And so being become a sinner, if he would live by the law, as a covenant of works, he must repair the breach sin has already made in that pure and holy law of God, which is as impossible for a creature; yea, he must also perfectly obey

v. 4. obey the law in all time coming, in all its spirituality, intent, and extent, which is another simple and absolute impossibility for Adam, and all his degenerate offspring. Thus the whole book of God assures us, and all the world, that there is but one sacrifice, one propitiation, one atonement for the least sin in all the universe of God, viz. the atoning blood, the all-perfect righteousness, the divine obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2, 4, 9, 16. Heb. ix. 22. 1 Pet. i. 18, 21. This then, in few words, is that wretched, miserable, and undone estate, into which the Fall brought mankind; and which stands divinely described, unanswerably demonstrated, all over the divine record. And therefore, by the works of the law, no sinner of mankind ever was, no flesh living ever possibly can be, justified in the sight of God. Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. vi. 2, 3. i. ii. iii. chap. at large. vii. 18, 24. viii. 5. 8. Gal. ii. 15, 16, 19, 21. iii. 10, 13. v. 19, 21. 1 Cor. ii. 14. vi. 9, 10, 11. Psal. li. 5. Job xiv. 4. xxxiii. 23, 24. Zech. ix. 11. Gen. vi. 5. Phil. iii. 19. Jer. xvii. 9. Jam. iii. 8. Eph. ii. 3.

C H A P. X.

Upon eternal Life and Happiness, or everlasting Salvation, only in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Way of the Covenant of Grace.

THUS the covenant of works was no sooner broken, than it was for ever set aside, in the divine economy, as either the condition or tenure of life and happiness for any of mankind sinners; that is, as a covenant of life and peace for them. However, the moral law, as a covenant of works, is published all over the divine record, as of eternal obligation to all such as live and die under it, as a covenant of works; and is as uniformly and invariably published as a rule of life, the whole moral law, or law of the Ten Commandments; as in the hands of Jesus Christ, as Mediator and

and Saviour to all such of mankind as believe in Jesus Christ, through grace, to the saving of their souls: To whom Christ is the end of that law, as a covenant of works for righteousness. Rom. x. 14. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, whether moral or ceremonial, viz. to every one that believeth. Rom. iii. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law. Rom. vi. 12, 14. viii. 1, 13, 34.

And hence this grand fact, this glorious and divinely important truth of God, stands fully illustrated; yea, infallibly and unanswerably demonstrated all over the living oracles of the one only living and true God; yea, and wrote, as with the sun itself, in the experience of all mankind, saints or sinners, in every age and period of the church and world, ever since the introduction of sin, and the very first intimation of a Saviour, namely, that it is only in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour; as the glorious medium of intercourse between heaven and earth; the sole and the blessed mean of all actual and saving communion and fellowship between God and man; as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation, and that in the way of the covenant of grace; that new, that everlasting, and well-ordered covenant, that the first Adam himself, or any of his sinful, fallen, and apostate race, could ever possibly deal with God, either with safety or comfort; or have the least saving access to, or fellowship with him, either in grace here, or in glory hereafter; or, in other words, obtain eternal life and happiness, or everlasting salvation; and that of pure love; rich, free, and sovereign grace; or tender mercy alone, as to them; which is evident, in a manner, as the very light of the sun at noon, from the Holy Scriptures. As when it is said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. For by grace are ye saved. And by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. And this is the record

record that God hath given unto us, eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him." John iii. 16, 36. 1 John iv. 10. v. 11, 12. Eph. i. 4, 12. ii. 5, 8. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 2 Tim. i. 9. Heb. viii. 10. And thus the Son of God, while here in person in the flesh, assures us, and all the world besides, that he is the way, the truth, and the life; and that no sinner of mankind can come unto the Father but by him: And he that cometh unto him, viz. as the one and only way to the Father; that is, in good earnest in his name, by his Spirit, according to the word of God; he will in no wise, that is, for no cause, upon no account whatever, cast out. Accordingly, any sinner of mankind that ever thus came to God in his Son, was always graciously accepted of him; and otherwise, no sinner of mankind ever was, or can be, accepted of the Father. John xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44, 63. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Mark xi. 24. Luke xi. 9, 13. Rom. viii. 9, 14, 17. 1 Cor. ii. 14, xii. 3. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 12, 13. iv. 13.



B O O K III.

THE PERSON, OFFICE, AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST, WITH
HIS GREAT SALVATION FOR ALL SAINTS INDEED,
BEFORE, OR UNDER THE LAW.

C H A P. I.

*A View of Jesus Christ, the Word of God; with the divine
Authority of Holy Scripture.*

THUS as the Lord Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and a quickening spirit, is the living and life-giving head to, the foundation and center of, the whole new creation, and also head over all things to his church; so he is the grand line of life that runs through the whole book of God, and, indeed, it would appear, the all of the works of God also; and gives being and existence, life and vigour, power, virtue, and efficacy, beauty, order, and harmony, to the great whole. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49. Eph. i. 19, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 15, 19. Isa. xxviii. 16. Psal. cxviii. 22. Matt. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11, 12. Rom. ix. 33. x. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Rev. i. 11. iii. 14, 21. vi. 22, 13. Thus that the Holy Scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testament, are in very deed the word of God, being clothed with divine light and evidence in every line, and therefore ought to be received by all mankind wherever they come and are known, not as the word of man, but as in very deed the word of God, which ever by his grace effectually works in all that do indeed believe, (1 Thess. ii. 13) is abundantly evident to demonstration itself, from the heavenliness of the matter; for it is all God-like and Christ-like, and could never proceed from any other original.

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The purity and power of the word of God, and efficacy of its doctrines, whenever accompanied with the influence of his grace and spirit upon any person, also shows it. The antiquity of the Holy Scripture shows its divine original. The Son of God, on Mount Sinai, evidently taught Moses, by the two tables, the art and use of letters and writing; and, by him, the church first; and then, in the course of time, the world; inasmuch, that all other books are late and modern to the Bible.

divine
All the world must allow the authority of Holy Scripture, for it is all evidently the voice of God, and not of man; the majesty of it, both as to style and sentiment; inasmuch, that all the flowers of Greece or Rome, or any thing this world ever produced, cannot come within sight of, nor bear the least just comparison to it.

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The wonderful and divine consent and harmony of all its parts, composed, by means of so many different persons, in such different and distant ages, times, and places, show all the world that they must have been all guided and directed, actuated and animated, by the same Son of God, through the same God, holy and unerring Spirit of God, the grand and godlike scope and end of the whole; which is to give all glory to God and his Christ, and free grace, which is the great and the last end of the whole of it; and next to, and in subordination to that, to promote the holiness and happiness of men both here and hereafter; in this world, and that to come. The absolute and entire perfection of Holy Scripture, so far as it can be any way necessary to promote these grand, glorious, divine, and godlike ends, or, indeed, the least of them, these all jointly and severally shew us, and all the world besides, wherever a God and a Bible is known, That the Holy Scriptures are, and must be, and indeed only can be, the word of God.

Moreover, the wonderful, the grand, the gracious, and glorious discovery the word of God makes of Jesus Christ, and salvation only in and by him; or of God as in Christ, as love itself, grace and truth itself, to all that come to him in his Son; with the one and only way of being interested before God in this great Saviour, and in his great salvation.

The many prophecies emitted in the Old Testament, concerning Christ and the gospel, gloriously illustrated, and abundantly confirmed, in the facts and events recorded of him in the New ; with the many miracles wrought by Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles ; the least of which is a divine attestation to the truth of any doctrine, as God only could work it.

These also infallibly, and, indeed, unanswerably, demonstrate the divinity of the Holy Scriptures : But as God only can teach the heart of man, after all these arguments, sufficient to convince the understanding ; it is the power of the grace and Spirit of Christ, accompanying the word of God, that can only implant true, divine, and saving faith in Christ, and God as in Christ, and in the word of his grace, in the heart and soul of any sinner of mankind ; which faith in Christ is always the gift of God to, the purchase of Christ for, and the fruit and work of the good and Holy Spirit of God in, all that are blessed with it. Eph. ii 8, 20. Phil. i. 29. Gal. v. 22. Psal. xix. 7, 11. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. 2 Pet i. 21. 1 Theff ii. 13. 1 John ii. 20. v. 7, 8, 9, 12. 1 Cor. ii. 9, 13. Isa. viii. 20. lix. 21. Jer. xv. 16. Gal. vi. 16. Col. iii. 16.

Holy Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture ; and, by the will and appointment of God in the word, the supreme rule for the decision of all matters of controversy or opinion, as well as matters of faith or practice amongst christians. Isa. viii. 20. Acts xvii. 11, 15. xiv. 18. xviii. 28. ix. 22. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16. Phil. iii. 15, 16. Matt. xv. 9, 22, 29. xxiii. 8, 10. Col. ii. 8, 20, 21, 22. Heb. i. 5, 8. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. John v. 39. Luke xvi. 29, 30, 31. Jer. xv. 16. Psal. xix. 7, 11.

C H A P. II.

*Shewing that Jesus Christ is both God and Man in one Person,
the eternal, only begotten, and well-beloved Son of
God; his Son and Servant also by Office,
as Mediator and Saviour.*

THUS the all of the divine record, or testimony of God, concerning his own dear Son and eternal life, and everlasting salvation only in and by him for any sinner of mankind, fully shows us, all over the Holy Scriptures, that whenever the Lord Jesus Christ should appear in his own world, in the amiable and divine character of Saviour of sinners, he should be God as well as man; yea, both God and man in one person. This the very first promise of Christ plainly intimates, (Gen. iii. 15) "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent."

This the same promise renewed to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob, to David, and made known indeed to all the believing fathers, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, plainly signified. Such a Messiah, whenever he should appear, the Jews to a man expected. Luke xix. 38. Thus Moses, the man of God, tells the people of Israel, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." Deut. xviii. 18, 19. Acts iii. 22, 23.

The psalmist, David, proclaims him as such, Psal. ii. 6. cx. 1, 2, 3, 4. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3, 4. Isaiah, Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7. Jeremiah, Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxi. 22. The prophet Micah, Mic. v. 2. Zechariah, Zech. ix. 9. xiii. 7. John, the beloved apostle, and disciple of Christ, proclaims in divine lines, John i. 1, 2, 3, 14. x. 30. 1 John v. 7. The apostle Paul, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Yea, the Son of God witnessed this good confession before Pontius Pilate, and also before the Jewish rulers, at the expence of his life.

1 Tim.

vi. 13. Luke xxii. 67, 70, 71. Acts iv. 27, 28. The evangelist Matthew, Matt. i. 21, 23.

But as the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal, only-begotten, and well-beloved Son of God, yea, both God and man in one person; so he is by office, as Mediator and Saviour, both the Father's son and servant. Isa. xlii. 1. John xiv. 28. xx. 17. And so God, as in Christ, is the God and Father of all his saints and people in him. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God," says the holy Jesus, John xx. 17. and as Mediator and Saviour; and, so by office, both the Father's son and servant: He tells us himself, "My Father is greater than I," John xiv. 28.

C H A P. III.

Shewing that Adam, and all the believing Fathers before the Flood, were, and only could be, saved by Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven.

Thus the first Adam, by his own voluntary act and deed, by his sin in eating the forbidden fruit, having for ever lost, marred, and eternally ruined his own all, and the all also of all he represented. Rom. v. 12. vi. 23.

The covenant of works was no sooner broke, and for ever set aside as a covenant of life and peace for Adam or any of his apostate race, than the God of love and all grace revealed his Son to him as a Saviour; as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation, who should restore and recover the all of all his spiritual and respective seed; that is, the all of all such of mankind as should ever in good earnest come to God the Father in and by him. Gen. iii. 15.

Thus it would appear evident, that our guilty first parents were taught of God, and disposed, directed, and enabled, by the power, grace, and Spirit of God and of his Christ,

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to believe on the Jesus Christ, to saving of their souls; as a Saviour every way worthy of God, and suitable for them; an entirely suitable and all-sufficient Saviour, who should, by dying, destroy sin and death, and all the works of the devil; who, by his holy birth, righteous life, and satisfactory death, should finish transgression, make an end of sin, bring in an everlasting righteousness, and make a full and final purchase of all life and happiness for his people; and so, by one offering, for ever perfect all them that are sanctified. For it became him, of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect, through sufferings; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9. ix. 26, 28. x. 14. 1 John ii. viii. iv. 10. Isa. liii. 6. 10, 11, 12.

Thus as the Son of God was revealed to Adam, even in Eden, as a Saviour, and the whole first creation was only an introduction to the second or new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord; and Christ is evidently the true tree of life, the true mercy-seat or throne of grace. It would appear, the cherubims, before the tree of life in the garden of Eden, with the flaming sword, turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life after he was turned out of Paradise, did point out to him, God as in Christ, and only accessible in his Son, as afterwards in the tabernacle or temple in the holy of holies.

But whatever was in this, it would appear certain, our first parents were taught of God; what by immediate revelation from heaven, and especially the first famous promise, the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent; and by the institution of sacrifices, pointing out Christ as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, thus typically and emblematically slain; and by the power of the grace and spirit of Christ accompanying these, to know and believe God's love as in Christ; and so to receive a whole Christ, in his whole character as a Saviour, with their whole hearts, and as the unspeakable gift of God; resting and relying upon him alone for salvation; seeking daily, through grace, to improve him as a Saviour for all the purposes

poses of life and salvation ; rejoicing to hold, and have their all of him, whether for time or eternity. Thus living by faith on the Son of God, and walking in the love of God ; being followers and constant imitators of God, and of his Christ ; in every thing imitable, as dear children, passing the time of their sojourning here in God's fear ; perfecting true gospel holiness in his sight. Heb. ii. 4. John i. 12, 13. iii. 3, 5. Heb. xi. vi. Rev. xiii. 8. John xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44, 63.

Thus we are certain, by the divine record, that not only Adam, but all the believing fathers before the flood, for the space of sixteen hundred and fifty-six years, from the creation of the world, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, according to the best calculation from the books of Moses, lived by faith on the Son of God, and walked in the love and fear of God, according to the mind and will of God, as made known to them ; what by immediate revelations from heaven ; by prophecies and promises ; by types and figures, with the works and ways of God towards them ; and so lived in a constant and entire subjection to, and dependence upon the Son of God ; where all true religion begins in the soul, living by faith, by promise, by prayer, and in obedience and conformity to God and his Christ, and to the gospel of his grace ; however wickedly others lived, and provoked God to destroy them off the face of the earth, by the flood, or general deluge. Thus, by faith in Christ, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness, that he was righteous, viz. before God, by imputed righteousness, and also adorned inwardly with implanted grace, inherent righteousness, or true gospel holiness : God testifying of his gifts, or bearing witness of both these ; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh, both to the church and world.

By faith in Christ, Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him ; but before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God ; but without faith in Christ, it is impossible to please him. Noah found grace also in the sight of God, through Christ ; and, by faith in him, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Heb. i. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 13.

Thus

Thus, ever since sin entered into the world, and the very first intimation of a Saviour, there never was, and while God's sun in the heavens shines there never will be, another way of living safely, comfortably, and happily, but by faith in the Son of God, or at least of dying happy, but by the same faith in Christ, in which Saints indeed live. Heb. xi. 1, 2, 6, 13. x. 30. Hab. ii. 4. Rom. i. 17. iii. 21, 22, 24, 28. xiv. 23. Gal. ii. 15, 16, 20. iii. 10, 11. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15.

Thus Noah, the tenth generation with Adam from the creation of the world, obtained mercy and found grace—special mercy and saving grace in the sight of God the Father, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, as all the believing fathers had done before him, and so lived by faith and promise, and walked with God in the Son of his love, as the special objects both of his grace and providence. Thus Noah, by faith in Christ, both prepared an ark to the saving of his house, and, by the blessing of God, and in the hands of the Son of God, in a manner as another Adam, repopled and replenished the world anew, after the flood. Heb. xi. 7. Deut. lxxxiii. 3. Eccl. ix. 1.

C H A P. IV.

Upon the believing Fathers from Noah to Moses.

THUS Noah and his family being preserved safe in the ark from the mighty deluge, which prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days, and overtopped the highest mountains fifteen cubits, or seven yards and an half, and destroyed every living creature he left behind him on the earth, when he went into the ark. For the ark was the mean of God's appointment, to preserve Noah and his family, and a seed of all living creatures, to repeople and replenish the earth. And any mean or instrument God sees meet to appoint or employ, will always be sufficient to serve his end or purpose, Deut. xxxii. 4. Thus Noah being not only preserved safe upon the waters, with his prodigious family, but as safely landed again upon the earth; for the Lord leaves

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not his own finally, in case. *Psa. xciv. 14. Isa. liv. 9, 10. Heb. xiii. 5.*

To shew that sacrifices and burnt-offerings were of divine appointment from Adam to Moses, as well as after, he builded an altar unto the Lord Jehovah in the faith of Christ, to come into the world in the fulness of time, and offered burnt-offerings upon it, which were graciously accepted of God the Father, for the sake of Christ. And God blessed him and his seed, and faithfully promised him that he would no more curse the ground for the sake of man, nor overflow the earth with a flood; but while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, should not cease. *Gen. viii. 20, 22, ix. 11, 17. Matt. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7. Col. ii. 8, 20, 22.*

Thus the person and services of Noah were graciously accepted of God the Father, for the sake of God the Son. And he and his sons were blessed abundantly, to the repeopling and replenishing the world anew. And Noah at last, in the name and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, blessed his sons, and foretold them what should befall them in the following ages of the world. He, by the eternal spirit of the eternal God, conferred the blessing of the promised seed, or Messiah, upon Shem, a younger son, and promised Japhet, the elder, that God should enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; that is, that the Gentiles of his seed peopleing all Europe, with some part of Asia, it would appear, should embrace Christ and the gospel. And Ham, with his offspring, who peopled all Africa, with part of Asia, should be a servant to both his brothers; which curse of God and awful denunciation stands exemplified to the world to this day; first, in the destruction of the seven nations of Canaan by Joshua and the people of Israel, who were the lineal descendants of Canaan the son of Ham, and also in all the different nations of Africa to this present moment.

So infallibly true and gloriously certain is the all of the word of God, heaven and earth may pass away, as they will at last; but one jot, or tittle of the word or law of God, can in no wise fail or fall to the ground. *Matt. v. 18. Gen. x. 11, 12. Chapters at large xviii. 18, 21. xii. 22. xv. 18. Exod. xii. 40, 42.*

Thus

Thus Abraham, of the seed of Shem, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, was called of God to go from Ur of the Chaldees, to sojourn in the land of Canaan, and live by faith and promise in that land. And the God of love, and of all grace, comfort, and consolation, renewed to Abraham the grand promise of his Son as a Saviour; upon which, alone, all the hopes and happiness of Adam, and all the believing fathers after him, only did, and could depend; and assured him, that he should be of his seed, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed; yea, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And to ascertain this great and important promise more fully, he promises to him, and to his seed after him, the land of Canaan, as a possession, as a separate and distinct people, yea, as God's chosen and peculiar people, to whom as such should belong the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; until he that had the promise, the promise of the covenant of grace, which includes in it all the other great and precious promises of the gospel, should come; that is, until Jesus Christ, the very and eternal Son of God, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen, to the glory of God, should appear in this our world, in the likeness of man, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Gal. iii. 16, 19. iv. 4, 7.

Both these promises were made to Abraham about nineteen hundred and twenty-one years before the birth of Christ, and just four hundred and thirty years before the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and about two thousand and seventy-nine from the creation of the world, and four hundred and twenty-three years after the flood. The full, punctual, and exact accomplishment of both these promises made to Abraham, and all the other predictions as to the sons of Noah, unanswerably shew, the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God. Gen. x. 11, 12. Chapters at large, xviii. 18, 21. xii. 22. xv. 18. Exod. xii. 40, 42. Acts iii. 25. Rom. ix. 4, 5. Gal. iii. 8, 19.

Thus Abram, a mighty father; Abraham, a mighty father of nations, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promises; and indeed all his believing

seed; and Job, who is supposed and allowed to have lived between the days of Abraham and Moses; who, if he was not descended of Huz, the son of Nohar, Abraham's brother, Gen. xxii. 21; yet lived in the land of Uz, not far from Urr of the Chaldees, or even Chaldea, in the eastern parts of Arabia, upon the Euphrates. Job i. 1. James v. 11. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. Melchisedec, who lived in Abraham's day, an extraordinary person, raised up by God to figure out to men the Lord Jesus Christ, in his person and priesthood, as sole King in Zion, and the great New Testament High-Priest; yea, as both King of righteousness and peace, and sole, as well as great, New Testament High-Priest. As in his person and office he was thus such a glaring figure and glorious type of Christ and his kingdom, or reign of grace under the Gospel; he was greater than Abraham, and of a very different and superior order of priesthood to that of Aaron. Heb. vii. 1, 7. Psal. cx. 4.

These all lived by faith on the Son of God, and walked in the love and fear of God. And wherever they went, reared up altars unto the Lord Jehovah, and offered up sacrifices and burnt-offerings in the faith of Christ; and so were both assisted by, and accepted of him, in the beloved. And all these sacrifices accepted of God in his Son, whether by Melchisedec, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, or other saints and true worshippers, shew that they must have been of divine appointment, otherwise they could never have been accepted or approved of God. Gen. xii. 8. xxii. 13. xxxv. 3. Job i. 5. Matt. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7. Col. ii. 8, 20, 22.

Thus as there is no righteousness to justify any sinner of mankind before and as in the sight of God, but that of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour; his fulfilling all righteousness for his people; his doing and dying; his perfectly obeying the precept, and fully enduring the penalty of God's law, by his holy birth, righteous life, and satisfactory death.

All the saints and people of God, from Adam to Moses, believed on Jesus Christ, to come into the world, in the ful-
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ness of time, as the Lord Jehovah, their righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6. Micah v. 2. Gen. xviii. 25. Job xix. 25. xxxiii. 24. Isa. vii. 14. ix. 67. xlv. 24. And so, through him, had access by one Spirit unto the Father, Eph. ii. 18; and were all justified in the name, washed and sanctified by the word and Spirit, of the Lord Jesus; and created anew in him, even unto good works. And so, in very deed, had their fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 John i. 1, 3. Heb. xi. 1, 2, 3. iv. 22. Gal. ii. 15, 16. iii. 6. xi. 16. Heb. ii. 4. John viii. 56. Job xix. 25, 27.

C H A P. V.

Upon Moses and the Law.

THUS Moses, the man of God, and the many thousands of Israel, were brought out of Egypt about one thousand four hundred and ninety-one years before the birth of Christ, by the almighty arm and out-stretched hand of Jehovah their God, by signs and wonders, and miracles; and also, by faith in Christ, walked through the Red Sea as on dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. And the Lord Jesus Christ went upon their head in a pillar of cloud by day, and a fire by night, for the space of forty years, all the way to the holy land; so that they were led, fed, and cloathed, yea, supported and protected, by miracle, all the way to the land of Canaan, the land of promise; and, at last, put in possession of it by the same power and providence of their almighty Leader, under the conduct of Joshua, as the Lord's minister after Moses: And, at the same time, amidst all these wonders of love, of power, and providence, in behalf of Israel, in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, as well as afterwards in Canaan, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, in the third month after they came out of Egypt, appeared on mount Sinai, attended with his holy angels, and Moses and Aaron his ministers, cloathed with majesty and terror, with thunders

ders and lightnings; and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the sound of trumpet exceeding loud, with fire and smoke ascending heaven as a great furnace, and the whole mount quaking greatly; shaking, as it were, to the center; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." And yet, amidst all this majesty and thunder, this fire and smoke, this lightning and blackness, darkness and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, and the very mount shaking to the foundation, he spoke ten words with an audible voice, to the hearing of all the many thousands of Israel; and gave the law of the Ten Commandments, the whole moral law, as a rule of life, as in his hands, as Mediator and Saviour for all the saints and people of God, to the end of time. Thus he frontispieces this pure and holy law with the purest gospel, the very sum and substance of it. Exod. xx. 1, 2.

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy God, thy God in Christ, in covenant, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, or servants. Thou shalt have none other gods before me, &c. And as the same moral law, or law of the ten commandments, or ten words, as Moses styles them, was the law of man's creation; and personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience to this law, as a covenant of works, was the condition or tenure of life and happiness to Adam in innocence: However, the test of his obedience to this whole law was put upon obedience to a positive precept, as to the forbidden fruit, of which condition he soon failed, and for ever ruined himself, and all he represented, for any thing that he or they could do. This law, considered as a covenant of works, and thus published from mount Sinai, was a fiery law indeed, a word of pure wrath, death, and condemnation to any sinner of mankind. Exod. xix. xx. chapters at large. Deut. iv. 7, 13, 31, 40. xxxii. 8, 12. xxxiii. 2. Exod. xix. 20. xxxiii. 9, 10. Neh. ix. 12. Psal. cv. 39, 45. Heb. ix. 29. xii. 18, 21. Gal. ii. 15, 16. iii. 10, 11, 12, 19, 22. Rom. x. 5. Matt. xix. 17.

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Thus our blessed Lord and Saviour, from mount Sinai, taught both the church and world, that by the works of the law no sinners of mankind, no flesh living, was or could be saved. And in the way of the law, as a covenant or works, when once broken, life and happiness here or hereafter was not so much as possible, or even supposable, for Adam, or any of his fallen race: And so it was for ever abolished, and eternally set aside, in the divine economy, as the condition and tenure of life and happiness for any of mankind sinners. For if Adam, in innocence, soon failed of happiness in this way, how shall it be possible for any of his degenerate sons? And therefore it is only by the rich and free grace, the pure and sovereign love, and tender mercy of God as in Christ, or in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the way of the covenant of grace, that any sinner of mankind is, or can be saved. And thus to hold and have our all of Jesus Christ for time or eternity, for this life or that to come, is a sure and an infallible foundation, for faith and hope, to all such of mankind as are in real union and of one spirit with the Son of God, as all saints indeed are; which can no more fail, than God himself can cease to be. For because, and as I live, says the holy Jesus, of all such, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19. Rom. viii. 9, 14, 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 6, 17. And therefore, on the one hand, this is a tenure of life and happiness for the least real saint and sincere christian; unspeakably, inconceiveably, yea, divinely more excellent than either man or angel was ever possessed of; either Adam in innocence, or any of the holy angels. For their creature state, as such, did, and always would have made them subject to change, unless they had been made independent beings, or, in other words, a sort of little gods; than which, nothing can be either more absurd or impossible: And so, on the other hand, all attempts of any of mankind sinners to obtain life and happiness by any thing in or done by themselves, as by their own righteousness, or will, or works; or indeed in any other way than by the pure love, rich grace, and tender mercy of God as in Christ; that is, only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the way of the covenant of grace, where

Thus

where an all-wise, an infinitely good and gracious God has only laid these, and where they are only to be found by mankind sinners, is equally absurd, impious, and impossible, as the word of God fully shews. John iii. 16, 36. viii. 36. Eph. i. 4, 7. ii. 5, 8, 13, 14, 18, 22. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 1 John iv. 9, 10. v. 11, 12. Acts iv. 12, 13, 38, 39. xxvi. 18. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 26. v. 1, 12, 19. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49. iii. 11. Gal. i. 6, 9. ii. 15, 16. iii. 8, 11. 1 Pet. i. 18, 21. Isa. xxviii. 16. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, in the character of Mediator and Saviour, as Emanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God in, with, and amongst men, attended with his holy angels, and cloathed with majesty and thunder, gave the moral law with an audible voice, from mount Sinai, thus both as a rule of life to Saints, and also published it as a covenant of works to all such of mankind as should live and die under it; as such, Exod. xx. And he also gave the whole ceremonial law, with all the institutions and sacrifices thereof, to Moses on mount Sinai, and by him to the people of Israel, as the church of God, as a typical Mediator, a figure and representation of himself, as the one and only Mediator between God and men. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Isa. iv. 12. John xiv. 6. vi. 37.

As also the whole judicial law, which respected them as a nation and people distinct from all other nations in the world, whose government was a Theocracy, or government under God. Exod. xx. and the following chapters, Deut. iv. 7, 15, 31, 40. x. 4, 32. ix. 14, 33. i. 5. Psa. ii. 6. Job xxxiii. 24. James iv. 12. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Thus the same Christ, and the same covenant of grace, was made know; the same pure love, rich, free, and sovereign grace and tender mercy of God, as in Christ, was manifested and displayed through all the different dispensations of it, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ; for the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which, we draw nigh unto God. And the law was only a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ; or Moses and the law was just Christ, and the

the gospel in miniature, type, and figure; or Christ was at once the sum and substance, the very life and glory of the whole legal or Mosaical dispensation. Heb. vii. 19. viii. 1, 2, 6, 9. xxiv. 10. 1 Col. ii. 17. Matt. v. 17, 22, 35, 49, John i. 17. Rom. x. 4, 14. viii. 9, 10. James ii. 19. 11,

CHAP. VI.

A Gospel View of the Law of Moses.

THUS the whole dispensation of God's grace as in Christ, or all the different dispensations of one and the same covenant of grace, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, proclaims aloud, and in every line, both to the church and world, God is love; God as in Christ is love, rich in grace, and abundant in mercy to all that come to him in his Son!

Yea, that God is thus in very deed in Christ, reconciling sinners unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, insomuch, that all such of mankind as ever came to him in good earnest, in his Son, by his Spirit, according to the word, were ever graciously accepted of him. Gen. iii. 15, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. 2 Cor. v. 18, 21. Psa. lxxxix. 1, 4, 19, 20, 26, 37. Job xix. 25, 27. xxxiii. 24. Jer. xxxii. 38, 42. Zech. ix. 11. Col. iii. 6, 9. Deut. xviii. 15, Acts iii. 22, 23. John xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44, 63. Matt. vii. 7, 11, 22, 35, 40. Luke xi. 9, 13.

And hence, it is evident as the light of the sun at noon, or to demonstration itself, all over the sacred page, that this is the native voice, the genuine language of all immediate revelations from heaven, from the very first intimation of a Saviour, Gen. iii. 15. Of all the promises, prophecies, or predictions; of all typical persons, things, or places; of all sacrifices or offerings; of all ordinances and institutions of the Son of God, whether before or under the law; for the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, is our judge; the Lord is our law-giver, our statute-maker; the Lord is our king, he will save us, Isa. xxxiii. 22. Exod. xx. chapter at large. Psa. ii. 6, Acts iii. 22, 23.

Thus Adam was evidently a type and figure of Christ, as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Rom. v. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, 49.

Melchisedec, king of righteousness and peace, and priest of the most high God, an extraordinary person, greater than Abraham, and whose priesthood was greater than Aaron's, and of a very different order was raised up by God, to exhibit to the church and world, a plain pattern or example of the person, priesthood, ministry, and kingdom, or reign of Christ; as both the Great New Testament High Priest, and sole King in Zion. Gen. xiv. 18, 20. Heb. vii. 1, 22. Psa. ii. 6. cx. 4. Acts iii. 22, 23.

And, says the prophet Jeremiah in his own name, and in the name of all his fellow-saints, This is the name wherewith he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness, Jer. ii. 3, 6.

The Jewish high priest, in a continued succession, was a glaring figure of Christ, as the great New Testament High Priest. Heb. ix. 24. x. 14, 19, 22.

Moses, the man of God, as a typical Mediator and Law-giver, was a figure of Christ to come, as the one and only Mediator between God and men, and as a perfect law-giver. Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Acts iii. 22, 23. James iv. 12. Matt. xxiii. 8, 12.

Joshua, David, Solomon, and others, were also, no doubt, types of Christ, figures of him that was to come.

Circumcision, and the passover, were both signs and seals of the righteousness of faith, of salvation by Jesus Christ, and by him alone. Rom. iv. 11, 16. Gal. iii. 8. 1 Cor. v. 7. Heb. xi. 28.

Their daily sacrifices and burnt-offerings were constant representations of Christ, as the Lamb of God slain, typically and emblematically slain from the foundation of the world. Rev. xiii. 8. John i. 29, 35, 36. Heb. ix. 11, 14, 19, 22.

Yea, all their sacrifices and offerings were offered up unto God, professedly at least, in the faith of Christ. Heb. vii. 19. x. 1, 10. Col. ii. 17.

The pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, shewed all the many thousands of Israel, that God, as in Christ, was in, with, and amongst them. The

The bread from heaven, the water out of the rock, with the brazen serpent in the wilderness, also demonstrated to them and all the world, in a manner, the Almighty power and special presence of the Lord God of Israel.

As likewise, that the Lord Jesus Christ would come into the world in the fulness of time, as both God and man in one person; as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation; as the bread of life, and the water of salvation. Neh. ix. 12. Exod. xl. 34, 38. John iii. 14, 15. vi. 29, 31, 35. 1 Cor. x. 1, 4. John xi. 25, 26.

The tabernacle, and after it the temple, with the mercy-seat and ark of the covenant, and the law of God therein; the brazen altar of burnt-offering, the golden altar of incense, with indeed all the furniture and appurtenances, in a manner of the tabernacle and temple; and especially the mercy-seat, with the cherubims of glory overshadowing it; the Shechina, or divine presence there; and the Jewish high priest, once a year, viz. on the great day of atonement, or expiation with blood and incense in the Holy of Holies before the mercy-seat; with the names of all the twelve tribes of Israel upon his shoulders, and also upon his breast-plate, and the Urim and Thummim, or lights and perfections there.

These all proclaimed aloud to all the world, that God, as in Christ, was there; that the tabernacle of God was in very deed with men; and that he had graciously condescended to dwell with them upon earth. Yea, that the Lord Jesus Christ, who should come into the world in the fulness of time, should be the true tabernacle or temple, the true mercy-seat or throne of grace; in whom all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell bodily; all gifts and graces, necessary for himself, as the head of the new creation, and for the whole church of God, whether militant upon earth, or triumphant in heaven. 2 Chron. vi. 18. Rev. xxi. 3. John i. 14, 18, 20, 21, 22. ii. 29. Matt. xxvi. 61. Eph. i. 23. Col. xxix. 10. iii. 19. Heb. vii. 24, 25. ix. 11, 24. x. 14, 19, 22.

Thus the Jewish tabernacle, even in the wilderness, and after it the temple at Jerusalem, stood open to all the world; so that any man, of whatever nation under heaven, might have been a profelyte to their religion, upon the terms their law prescribed; as the court of the Gentiles fully shews. And accordingly there were at different times, at least many profelytes. Acts ii. 5, 14. viii. 27, 28, 29.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ was evidently the sum and substance, the very life and glory of the whole Mosaical dispensation; the very body, of which the whole ceremonial law was only the shadow. Col. ii. 17. Heb. vii. 19. x. 1.

C H A P. VII.

Sacred Biography, or a few Hints of the Lives of Old Testament Saints and Prophets.

THUS, not only all the believing fathers before the flood, as Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah; and after it, Noah, Shem, with their believing seed; as particularly Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God; with Isaac and Jacob; the heirs with him of the same promises; but also Melchisedec, Joseph, Job, with Moses the man of God, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord; with indeed all real Saints whatever, whether in Israel, or in any part of the earth, or wherever they lived; they all knew, and believed God's love as in Christ. They lived by faith in the Son of God, to come into the world in the fulness of time; and walked before God and men, in the love and fear of God, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; daily comforting themselves in a God, in Christ, as the Lord their God, whether living or dying.

Indeed, Enoch was translated to heaven, without tasting of death; but before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God; but without faith, viz. in Christ, it is impossible to please him. Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5, 6.

These all loved Jesus Christ, and God as in him, with all their hearts; souls, strength, and might; and as the native fruit

fruit and genuine effect of this love of God, and of his Christ, shed abroad in their hearts, and reigning in their souls, by the Holy Ghost, by the word and spirit of the Lord. They loved all Saints with a pure heart fervently, and breathed affection, love, and good-will towards all mankind; yea, in few words, they all lived before God the Father, in the hands of his dear Son, in a constant and entire subjection to, and dependance upon him by faith, by promise, by prayer, or in obedience and conformity to Christ and the Gospel, or the mind and will of God, as revealed and made known to them in the word of his grace, doing all in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus.

And at last all died in the same faith in Christ in which they lived, excepting Enoch, who, by faith in Christ, was translated to heaven without dying. Deut. xxxiii. 3. xxx. 6. Hab. ii. 4. Levit. xxvi. 11, 13. Jer. x. 23. xi. 4, 5. xxx. 22. Eccl. ix. 1. Matt. xxii. 36, 40. 1 Sam. ii. 9. Psal. xxxi. 19, 23, 24. xxxvii. 23, 24. cxvi. 7, 15. Mic. iv. 5, 6, 8. Zech. iv. 6. Heb. xi. chap. at large.

Thus Gideon, Barak, Jephtha, Sampson, David, Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, with all the other prophets, greater or lesser; greater, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; or lesser, as Hosea, with the other eleven following prophets, with indeed all the saints and people of God whatever, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, for about the space of one thousand four hundred and ninety-one years, even during that time, that prophecy ceased, in the Old Testament church, by the death of Malachi, their last prophet, well nigh four hundred years before Christ actually appeared as God in the likeness of man, as both God and man in one person; as Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God in, with, and amongst men.

These all lived, before God and men, in the very same manner, and by the very same tenure, all true believers, or saints indeed, had done before them, rejoicing to hold and have their all for time and for eternity, for this life and that to come; purely and only in, of, and by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and that in the way of the covenant

covenant of grace; or in the pure love, rich, free, and sovereign grace, and tender mercy of God as in Christ; all to a man disdaining, and for ever renouncing, all their own righteousness, as filthy rags before God, in point of justification before, and acceptance in his sight, either for their persons or services; with their own will, or works, or any thing in or done by themselves, whether as men or saints, as the least ground of their confidence before or acceptance with an infinitely pure and holy God; cleaving unto the Lord Christ with full purpose of heart, as their Lord, their lawgiver, their love and life, their righteousness and strength, their peace and hope; and to God, as in Christ, as their God and their all, whether for time or for eternity. Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. vii. 14. viii. 20. xlv. 24. lxiv. 6. Hab. ii. 4. iii. 17, 18. Rom. x. 4. Psal. xix. 7, 11. cxvi. 1. cxix. 97, 113, 163, 167. Jer. xv. 10. Heb. xi. at large. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. All this the whole Old Testament unanswerably demonstrates, and the New uniformly confirms, so that he that runs may read.

Thus not only these greatest and best of men, these saints of the first magnitude, and most eminent prophets of God, lived, and walked, and pleased God, and were approved of him through Christ; living by faith on the Son of God, and walking in the love and fear of God, being all famous for faith in Christ, and true gospel holiness, holiness in heart, in life, and all manner of conversation; as burning and shining lights, both in the church and world; burning with holy will, tempered zeal, with genuine piety, with sublime and exalted devotion, and shining with all the beauties of holiness, true gospel holiness, all the gifts and graces of the good and Holy Spirit of God, all the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ the Lord, unto the praise and glory of God the Father; each of them being a living witness for God and his Christ in the world, all of them holding fast the truths of God, the truth as in Jesus, in the face of all opposition, whether from earth or hell, as well as exemplifying them constantly in their lives and conversations in the world; some of them attesting all this at the expence of their life and their worldly all. Thus Elijah indeed

eed went up to heaven in a fiery chariot, without tasting
f death, as well as Enoch before the flood. 2 Kings ii.

I. But all real faints whatever, whether of God's true
Israel, to whom, as such, belonged the adoption, and the
glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the
service of God, and the promises, Rom. ix. 4; or of the
profelytes of the gate from among the Gentile nations, as
the Ethiopian eunuch, or others, Acts ii. 8, 11. viii. 39;
all these also knew and believed God's love as in Christ,
and walked humbly, tenderly, and circumspectly with
God in the world; living by faith, by promise, by prayer;
looking for the mercy promised to the fathers, waiting
for the consolation of Israel, living above this world while
in it, laying up their treasure in heaven, and carrying on a
conversation there; each of them being clear as the sun
before God by imputed righteousness, and fair as the moon
by implanted grace, by inherent holiness; living by faith
in the Son of God, and walking in the love of God, as a
living witness for God and his Christ in the world. Thus
the very name of the Lord Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God
with us, God in our nature, God in, with, and amongst
men; and the very name of the true church of God, in his
own style and language, also is Jehovah Shammah, that is,
the Lord Jehovah is there! God as in Christ is there! the
God of love and of all grace and truth is there! Isa. vii. 14.
x. 6, 7. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxi. 22. Ezek. xlvi. 35. Psal.
xvi. 5. xix. 7, 11. lxxiii. 23, 26. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Jer.
xv. 16. Isa. viii. 20, 26. i. 4. Lam. iii. 24. Hab. ii. 4. iii.
17, 18. Mic. v. 2, 6, 8. Zech. iv. 6. Mal. iii. 16, 17.
v. 2, 6. Matt. xxii. 35, 40. Luke i. 54, 55, 68, 75, 79.
i. 25.

B O O K IV.

UPON THE BIRTH, LIFE, AND DEATH OF CHRIST; WITH
HIS DOCTRINE AND MIRACLES,

C H A P. I.

Upon the Birth of Christ.

BUT as in nature the approaching day is ushered in, first, by the dawn of the morning, in some measure dispelling the clouds and darkness of the night, and then by the morning sun, in his golden rays, enlightening the face of the earth, and still continuing to wax brighter and brighter to his meridian splendor: So in grace, in the divine economy of God's grace, as in Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the all-glorious Sun of Righteousness, from his first dawn upon man, immediately upon the back of the fall, in that famous promise, Gen. iii. 15, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," to all his meridian splendor under the gospel, still continued to wax brighter and brighter; when the greatest, the best, and the last dispensation of God's grace, as in Christ, that shall ever visit the world, was fully established, and finally settled. What first by himself in person, and then after his death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, by his apostles and ministers, in his name, by his word, spirit, and power, and with all his authority. Heb. i. 1, 3, 8. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. 1 Tim. i. 15. iii. 16. Tit. iii. 4, 7. John i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 34, 35. Matt. xxiii. 8, 12. xxviii. 18, 20. James iv. 12. Rom. xiv. 4. Eph. iv. 11, 13. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 31.

Thus the grand and the leading fact in all the book of God, after the being and perfections of Almighty God, the

the Lord Jehovah, the sacred Three, Three in One, and One in Three, by God's own account all over the Divine record, and who is possessed of the sole and unalienable right, to say in the very least degree, either who, or what he is ; for there are no degrees in God, nor cannot be in a being of infinite perfections. Which grand and leading doctrine, as to Jesus Christ, as both God and man in one person, as Mediator and Saviour, is the great and the leading line, which runs through the whole sacred volume, the whole gospel, and gives being and existence, life and vigour, power, virtue, efficacy, beauty, order, and harmony, to the divine whole of the word, and also, it would appear, of the works of God all over the universe.

Thus, I say, this grand fact, this glorious truth of God, this most amazing scene, wonderful phænomenon, and astonishing, yea divinely important event, that ever did, or will, open upon the world, is now gloriously and divinely illustrated, fully and finally established, and infallibly and unanswerably demonstrated all over the New Testament.

What by the birth, life, and death of Christ ; by his doctrines and miracles, by his resurrection from the dead on the morning of the third day, his ascension to heaven forty days after his resurrection, his pouring down his good and holy spirit, with all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, upon his apostles and disciples, according to his promise, upon the day of Pentecost, or fifteenth day after his glorious resurrection ; his exaltation and glory in heaven ; his coming again in all his glory, to judge the world at the last day. And what by many other plain and illustrious facts, many other certain and infallible signs and proofs, exhibit in full length and evidence, by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, and by the holy, the adorable, and all-powerful providence of Almighty God, both as to the church and world ; not only in the apostolic age in such a glorious and glaring manner, but in some measure, ever since, to this present moment, and will be to the end of time. Thus this amiable and divinely endearing doctrine ; this God-like and Christ-like doctrine ; this heart-satisfying, soul-reviving, and ravishing, this soul-saving doctrine, is, in a manner, evi-

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dent all over the true church of God, to all true believers, all real Saints and sincere Christians, as the very sun in the heavens is unto the world. And indeed the one is divinely more important, and even more necessary, to the church, than the other is, or can be, to the world; namely, not only that God is in Christ, reconciling sinners unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; or that God, as in Christ, is love itself, grace and truth itself, rich in grace, and abundant in mercy to all the true seekers of his face, or all that come to him in good earnest in his Son; which indeed was always the case, from the introduction of sin into the world, and the very first intimation of a Saviour, in that famous promise, Gen. iii. 15, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, to all his meridian splendor, under the gospel; as the whole Old Testament fully shews, and the whole New Testament abundantly confirms.

But also that when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; that is, the very and eternal Son of God, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son, condescended in due time, actually to be made, and to become the Son of man, and assume the human nature into a personal union with the Divine nature, and appear as God in the likeness of men, the very and eternal Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, as both God and man in one person, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, by one offering for ever to perfect all them that are sanctified.

That all such of mankind, Jew or Gentile, or of whatever nation, tongue, or kindred of mankind upon the face of God's earth, as should obtain mercy, and find grace in the sight of God through Christ, or should in good earnest come to God the Father in the Son, by the spirit, according to the word of God, might not perish, but have eternal and everlasting life; yea, might be made and declared to be the sons and children of God; being all justified by the blood and righteousness, and sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord Jesus, and so heirs of God, through Christ. John i. 14, 17. iii. 16. xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44, 63. Gal. iv. 4, 7. 1

Time

Tim. i. 15, 17. iii. 16. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9.
 x. 26, 28. x. 14. 1 John iv. 7, 16. v. 7, 12. Rom. iii.
 1, 26. v. 1, 6, 8. i. 9, 14, 17. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi.
 9, 13. Col. iii. 17. John xiv. 13, 14. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 10.
 1 John iii. 1, 2, 8.

Thus the birth of Christ, the most important event that ever took place in the world, stands cloathed with all that divine light and evidence, the very nature and importance of the thing requires. He was to be born of a virgin, a new thing in the earth, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, and in the lowest circumstances of abasement. Which was all literally accomplished.

The angel Gabriel announced his miraculous conception by the Virgin Mary; saying, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. He proclaimed from heaven also his birth and character, being sent of God on purpose. He was to be both God and man in one person, and so a Saviour, every way worthy of God, and suitable for perishing sinners of mankind; an entirely suitable and all-sufficient Saviour, able to save, and willing to save, even unto the very uttermost, or to all intents and purposes, all such of mankind as should ever in good earnest come to God the Father, in, and by him. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, a Saviour from sin and misery, with all the effects and consequences of sin whatever, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Yea, the Lord Jehovah, by his prophet and evangelist, as well as angel, tells us, they shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God in, with, and amongst men. He was born into the world, not only as cloathed with this character and office, according to all the Old Testament promises and prophecies concerning him, as the chosen, the called, the sent and sealed, or anointed of God, and in these very circumstances also fully foretold, but at the very place where God had said by his prophet he should be born, Bethlehem of Judah, the city of David. Micah v. 2. Matt. ii. 5, 6. Luke ii. 4. John vii. 42.

An angel of God, in his name, and with all his authority, proclaims this joyful news, these glad tidings of great joy, to all nations, to the industrious shepherds watching their flocks by night, as soon, in a manner, as the Son of God was born.

And so it was, says the evangelist Luke, that while they were there, viz. Joseph and Mary, at Bethlehem, the days were accomplished, that she, viz. Mary the Virgin as yet, should be delivered; and she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloaths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night: And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; a glimpse of the divine glory, it would appear, with an extraordinary body of light; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring unto you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling cloaths, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, or of angels, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men. Luke ii. 1, 14. And upon the departure of the angels, the shepherds soon went to Bethlehem, and found all matters as thus told them. Luke ii. 15, 20.

And good old Simeon, and also Anna, a prophetess, both just, pious, and devout persons, and full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and also waiting for the consolation of Israel, attest this grand fact soon after the birth of Christ, and at his circumcision, in the very temple of God at Jerusalem. Luke ii. 21, 39. The sceptre was now departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet; and the Jews, as a nation and people, were now under the yoke or feet of the Romans. And therefore our Jesus was indeed the true Shiloh,

Shiloh, or sent of God; the true Messiah, or the Christ, the Lord, the Son of the living God, and Saviour of the world, that was to come, according to Jacob's prophecy when a-dying. Gen. xlix. 10.

Thus the Father of mercies, and the God of love and of all grace and truth, divinely attests the birth, the office, and character of his own dear Son, by his prophets, at different times and in divers manners, who all spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

By his holy angels, the happy messengers of these glad tidings of great joy to all people, who were sent from heaven on purpose upon this grand errand.

By the faithful and industrious shepherds in the field.

By good old Simeon, and Anna, a prophetess, both directed by the unerring Spirit of God in the temple.

But besides, divine Providence here loudly gives in her voice, and nature itself seems willing to acknowledge her God, as the Word made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, God in the likeness of men.

Thus Cæsar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, makes a decree, that all the world should be taxed; which of course brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where the Son of God and Saviour of the world only could be born.

Wise men came from the East, most likely from Arabia, directed by an extraordinary body of light, called a star, which appeared to them in their own country, and led them to Jerusalem, and from thence to Bethlehem, and stood over where the young child was, whom they devoutly worship as their God. Matt. ii. 1, 12. Luke ii. 1, 7.

And there was peace all over the Roman Empire, and the world, it would appear, when the Prince of Peace, the Peace-maker, and Peace-maintainer of all the saints and people of God, appeared in his own world; and not only the Jews universally expected their Shiloh, their Messiah; but the very Heathens, whether from confused tradition, revelation by means of the Jews, or the direction of Providence, seem to have expected some great personage to make his appearance in the world. Isa. ix. 6, 7, 14. xlii. 1. liii. 2, 3. lv. 3. lxi. 1, 3. Jer. xxxi. 22. Gen. xii. 3. xxii.

18. xlix. 10. Acts iii. 22, 23, 25. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Micah v. 2. Heb. v. 45. vii. 25. John i. 14. xiv. 6, 37. iii. 34, 35. vi. 27, 29. Acts iv. 27. Psal. ii. 2, 6. Luke iv. 18. Rom. v. 10. Tit. ii. 4, 7.

But as the Son of God, in infinite wisdom and goodness, and even according to the letter as well as spirit of God's word, thus came without observation, without worldly shew or grandeur, or external pomp, not only into his own world, but even to his own people, their heads being filled with the notions of a temporal kingdom, in ignorance, obstinacy, and unbelief; the bulk of them knew nor acknowledged him not. Psal. xxii. at large. cx. 1, 4, 7. Isa. liii. at large. John i. 1, 9, 10, 11. Luke xvii. 20.

CH A P. II.

Upon the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ, with the Character and Office of John the Baptist.

BUT as the birth of the holy Jesus was such as has been said, so his life was similar, and of a piece with it: For, says he himself, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head; although the God and Maker of the world, the Almighty Supporter and Supreme Ruler of it. Matt. viii. 20. xxviii. 18. Luke ix. 22, 58. John i. 1, 5, 9, 10, 14. Col. i. 15, 17. Heb. i. 1, 3.

And so he was both born and lived under his own law, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial; yea, he was born, lived, and died under the Roman law; subject to the Roman yoke. For he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. And a body hast thou prepared me, says he. For, forasmuch then as children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. Heb. ii. 14, 16, 18. x. 5. Luke ii. 1, 5, 20, 24, 51, 52. xxiii. 25. Matt. xxii. 20, 21. Acts iv. 27, 28. John xix. 16, 19.

Thus

Thus he lived, under the law, a perfectly innocent, righteous, and holy life; a laborious, a vigorous, and an active life; and was subject to his parents; and increased in wisdom, and age, and stature, and in favour with God and men. And the child Jesus grew, and waxed strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Luke ii. 39, 40.

When he was twelve years of age, he went up from Nazareth in Galilee, where he much resided, insomuch, that God had said by his prophets, he shall be called a Nazarine, in contempt by the Jews or others, but for the honour of God, to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover: Where after Joseph, his supposed father, and Mary his mother, had fulfilled their days, and finished their sacrifices and offerings, they returned to go to Nazareth, their city.

But the amiable and divine Jesus tarried behind them, and went into the temple at Jerusalem; which, in all its glory, was never more than a faint figure, or dark shadow of him, as the true tabernacle, the true temple of God with men upon earth, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; which dwelt indeed really there, but typically and emblematically also at the same time.

And there, in his own house, he soon associated or joined himself with the doctors of their law, likely their great Sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy elders at least; but indeed properly his own law, which he long since gave their fathers from mount Sinai: And in the very same character of Mediator and Saviour, or Emmanuel, God with us, in which he now appeared before and among them, although they knew him not. Being then both God and man in one person, both their law-giver and their law-fulfiller, he easily, at twelve years of age, both heard and asked them questions, which most likely respected their law, which the most knowing and learned amongst them, perhaps, might not be well able to answer. We are certain, at least, that all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers. Luke ii. 41, 52. John i. 1, 5, 14. xviii. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 5. James iv. 12.

And

And it is probable, though not certain, he wrought with Joseph, his supposed father, as a carpenter, for his bread; who was one, it would appear, until he was about thirty years of age, and entered upon his public ministry. Matt. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3. Luke iii. 23.

But whatever was in this before he entered upon his public ministry, his public office and character, as a preacher of his own gospel, and the Saviour of the world, John the Baptist, a sacred and venerable character indeed, a man sent of God on purpose, and with the spirit and power of Elias, went before him, to introduce and usher him into his kingdom and glory. John preached repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, calling upon his brethren the Jews, to repent and believe the gospel; assuring them that the kingdom of God was at hand; that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Shiloh, the true Messiah, even Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God in, with, and amongst men; so long promised to, so long expected by, all the believing fathers, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, was just now about to appear among them; as God in the likeness of men, the very and eternal Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh; as both God and man in one person, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and wash all his people from their sins, even in his own blood, and establish a kingdom that should never be moved nor overturned; a reign of light, by his word and ordinances, of life, of love, of faith, and of a sound mind; of the all of gospel holiness, and real Christian obedience; by the power of his grace and spirit, accompanying these with his works and ways in the hearts and souls, over the lips and lives of men; yea, thus in and over all such of mankind, Jew or Gentile, or of whatever nation under heaven, as should know and believe God's love as in Christ, or should in good earnest come to God in his Son, and so be in real union and of one spirit with him.

And therefore John, as the harbinger and forerunner of his Divine Lord and Master assures them, he should baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; with all the influences of his word, his grace, and spirit; his power and providence, which

which should purify and refine, yea, renew the souls of men, in a manner as fire refines silver or gold, or any metal. And so he calls upon the obstinate and unbelieving Jews, to fly as for their life, and their eternal all, from the wrath of God, to come upon a whole ungodly world, that live and die so; and to bring forth fruits meet for and worthy of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, through grace, to seek above all things to do so. Isa. xl. 3, 5. Mal. iii. 1, 4, 16. iv. 2, 3, 5. Matt. iii. 1. xii. 11, 14. Mark ix. 13. Luke i. 13, 17, 67, 80. iii. 16, 18. John i. 16, 19, 20.

Yea, John having well nigh finished his ministry as a forerunner, has the honour and happiness to point out, as with the finger, the divinely amiable, and altogether lovely Jesus, as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation; the very image and glory of God the Father, full of grace and truth; yea, both God and man in one person, and the great and the living representative both of God and his will to the world. John i. 14, 16, 17, 29, 30, 31, 36.

C H A P. III.

Upon the Life, Baptism, and Temptation of Jesus Christ.

BUT as Jesus Christ had been circumcised on the eighth day, according to the law of Moses, as being both the law-giver and law-fulfiller, the very sum and substance, the life and glory of the whole dispensation of God's grace as in Christ, whether before or under the law. Gen. xvii. 12. Luke ii. 21.

So he behoved to be baptised by John, before he entered openly upon his public ministry, office, and character, as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

As he came on purpose to destroy sin, and all the works of the devil, and fulfil all righteousness for his people; so as John was fulfilling his office, according to the divine ap-
I pointment,

pointment, both preaching repentance to, and baptising in Jordan, all that came to him confessing their sins. And vast multitudes, prodigious crowds, it would appear, came to him from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country round about.

Accordingly Jesus Christ himself came from Gallilee, where he much resided in private life, to Jordan, unto John to be baptised of him; but John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him; and so he was baptised, not only by John in Jordan, but also openly and avowedly by God the Father; with the Holy Ghost above all measure; as Christ the Son of the living God, his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and the sole Saviour of sinners; whom all the world of mankind ought to hear and obey by God's own appointment.

And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, (rent or cloven asunder, it wou'd appear) and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And, lo, a voice from heaven, from the excellent glory, from God the Father, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. Matt. iii. 15, 17. xvii. 5, 12, 18, 21. Mark i. 9, 11. Luke iii. 21, 22. 2 Pet. i. 16, 18.

Thus our blessed Lord and Saviour being both baptised in Jordan, and openly declared to be the Son of God, his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, by an audible voice from heaven, the chosen, the called, the sent, and the sealed of God, and the anointed of the Holy Ghost, above all measure.

He was led, or driven by the same good and holy spirit, into the wilderness of Sinai, it would appear, to be tempted of the devil. The same wilderness where Moses the man of God, and the law-giver in Israel, and Elijah the law-recoverer, had both already fasted forty days and forty nights. Then the Holy Jesus, the law-fulfiller, also fasted forty days and forty nights, amongst the wild beasts in the deserts, Mark

i. 13, and was afterwards an hungered. Upon which Satan is permitted of God to set upon him with three several temptations, which he easily repels with the word of God; and by his own example, teaches all his saints and people to do so likewise, in his name, by his spirit and power. Matt. iv. 1, 11. Mark i. 12, 13. Luke iv. 1, 13.

And then the devil leaveth him, and angels came and ministered unto him. Matt. iv. 11. Mark i. 12, 13.

Thus the Holy Jesus, being so highly favoured, was soon set upon by all the power and policy of the devil.

And therefore saints or good men are not to expect that their greatest attainments, or highest advancements in this life, will exempt them from trials, temptations, troubles, and afflictions.

But the Holy Jesus being now prepared by prayer and fasting, meditation and temptation, for the public office of a preacher of his own gospel; these glad tidings of great joy, salvation by Jesus Christ, and by him alone; for these help well to make a good minister, or servant of God in the gospel of his grace; he soon entered upon his public ministry, as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world; and began his divine preaching in Gallilee, a place held in some contempt by the Jews in general, and called even in sacred scripture, Gallilee of the Gentiles; but where he was brought up, and formerly much resided.

Here, even here, at Capernaum, in the land of Zebulon, and of Naphthalim, by the mouth of the Jordan, according to an Old Testament prophecy by Isaiah, the Evangelical prophet, in the name of the Lord Jehovah, about seven hundred and seventy years before the event took place; he begins his preaching of the everlasting gospel, and publishing the words of eternal life, those glad tidings of great joy salvation by Jesus, and by him alone.

And these very people who sat in darkness, saw this great light; and to them who sat in the very region and shadow of death, this light of Christ, and the blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel, sprung up. Isa. ix. 1, 2. Matt. iv. 12, 13, 16. Mark i. 14, 15. Luke iv. 14, 24. John i. 28, 37.

Which single circumstance shews us, and all mankind, that although heaven and earth may pass away, as they will at last, yet one jot, or the least tittle, of the word or law of God, can in no wise fail, or fall to the ground.

As also that all persons and things, from eternity before time, through time and to eternity, when time shall be no more, are ever under the all-seeing eye of God, in one continued view. Matt. v. 18. Acts xv. 18.

And therefore how humble, how self-denied, ought all the world, whether of men or angels, to be before God. Psal. cvi. 2. cxxxix. 6. cxlvii. 5. Job xi. 7.

And John the Baptist, having now fulfilled his ministry, and about finished the work the God of love and of all grace had given him to do in this world, he was cast into prison, and afterwards beheaded by wicked Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee. The reason was, unerring Wisdom assures us, because John had boldly reprov'd him for having Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, as his wife, and his many other great and enormous crimes; in which he was his best friend; for divine truth and a good conscience are bold and enterprising, and will flatter no man. Matt. iv. 12, 14. i. 12. Luke iii. 19. ix. 7. Mark xiv. 29.

C H A P. IV.

Upon the Call of Christ and his Apostles, and of all true Gospel Ministers; with his Life and Doctrines continued.

NOW, after John was imprisoned, Jesus Christ himself, who is alone the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation, to any sinner of mankind, openly, publicly, and avowedly, before all the world, commences preacher of his own Gospel.

For God will never want the fittest and the best instruments to serve his own purpose, and promote his own cause; and all that was ever done, or will be done, against God and his Christ, against the religion of Jesus and the truths of God as in him, whether by men or devils, saints

or sinners, will only serve, in the issue, to make God, and his Christ more glorious, his truth more illustrious, his cause and religion more venerable and respectable; as the case before us, with the all of the temptations and sufferings of Christ, the afflictions and persecutions of saints, or even the annals, whether of the church or world, fully shew. Matt. iv. 12, 17. Mark i. 1, iv. 15. Luke iv. 14, 24. John i. 28, 37.

And as he did not take this glorious office of a preacher of his own gospel, or of the Saviour of the world, upon himself; but was called and sent, of God the Father, as well as chosen, sealed, and anointed of him with the Holy Ghost above all measure; so he perfectly did his Father's will, and fully finished the work he had given him to do; and by so doing, exhibits a perfect pattern of love to God and men. And indeed he is the one and only perfect character so much as mentioned or hinted at in all the book of God, or that ever appeared in the world amongst mankind, since sin entered into it. For he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, and could challenge the most inveterate of all his enemies to convict him of the least sin; yea, the very devils proclaim him the Holy One of God: And therefore no man upon the face of God's earth has, nor indeed possibly can have, the least shadow of a divine right to take the sacred office of a minister of God, a preacher of Christ, or the Gospel, upon himself, or up at his own hand. But all true servants of God, in the Gospel of his Son, are uniformly the chosen, the called, the sent, and the sealed of God. Thus the Son of God himself says, Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers, not loiterers, into his harvest. Matt. ix. 37, 38. Luke x. 2. John viii. 46.

And, says the great apostle, Paul, to the Hebrews, no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that was called of God, as was Aaron; so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but he that said unto him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." Hab. v. 4, 10. vii, 26. Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34.

Thus, according to his Father's will, he directed his personal ministry principally to the Jews, as God's chosen and peculiar

peculiar people, the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and but occasionally to the Gentiles, as a prelude of that divine, that grand and glorious dispensation of God's grace as in Christ, which was to be fully opened up by the ministry of his apostles, equally directed to the Gentiles as to the Jews. Matt. xv. 24, 28. x. 5, 6. xviii. 11. John x. 16. Eph. iii. 3, 11. Acts xi. 1, 18. xiii. 46.

Thus, as Mediator and Saviour, and in the character of Emmanuel, God with us, he preached righteousness in the great congregations; he uniformly published, in the course of his personal ministry, both to the church and to the world, the doctrine of justification before, and as in the sight of God, for any sinner of mankind, by his mediatorial and imputed righteousness alone; which at once consists in all he did and suffered for his people, in his fulfilling all righteousness for them, by his perfectly obeying the precept, and fully enduring the penalty of God's law; or by his holy birth, righteous life, and satisfactory death; with which one doctrine the all of christianity at once stands or falls. Jer. xxiii. 6. Psal. xl. 9. Matt. iii. 15. v. 6. John i. 12. v. 17. vi. 28, 29. ix. 4, 19, 30. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 26. v. 1, 19. viii. 1, 33, 34. x. 4. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9, 10, 14.

And with this doctrine of imputed righteousness he as uniformly teaches the doctrine of implanted grace, the all of inherent righteousness, or true Gospel holiness; holiness in heart, in life, in all manner of conversation, which always go together all over the book of God, and in all real saints and sincere christians whatever.

Hence he assures all mankind, without exception or distinction, that unless a man, any man, any sinner of mankind, is born again, born from above, born of God, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, born of water and of the Spirit, and actually created anew in Christ Jesus the Lord, even unto good works, he cannot so much as see, much less enter into the kingdom of God, either of grace here, or of glory hereafter: As also except any sinner of mankind repents, he must perish eternally. For repentance is a duty only, and necessarily incumbent upon man as a sinner. It
consists

consists in a change of mind, of heart, and life; or in turning from all sin, and forsaking of it; and turning unto God, as in Christ, with full purpose of heart and soul, exemplified by a new life in Christ.

And therefore repentance unto life, or true and evangelical repentance towards God, is just as much the gift of God to, the purchase of Christ for, and the fruit and work of the good and Holy Spirit of God, in all that are blessed with it, as faith in Christ to the saving of the soul is. And without these, the whole word of God assures us, and all mankind sinners, we must perish eternally. And therefore we ought to seek these of God, for Christ's sake, above all things. John i. 12, 13. iii. 3, 5, 6, 44, 63. Matt. iv. 17. Mark i. 15. vi. 12. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Tit. ii. 11, 14. Acts xi. 18. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29. Gal. v. 22, 23.

And therefore it can never be more than a waking or midnight dream, yea, a pure delusion of the devil, for any of mankind to imagine, that the Son of God came into this our world only to set us an example of the sublimest and most consummate virtue, or the highest moral excellence, and that we stood in no more need of him as a Saviour. Whereas he was manifested to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself; to destroy all the works of the devil; and, by one offering, for ever to perfect all them that are sanctified. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9. ix. 26. x. 14. 1 John iii. 8. iv. 9, 10.

And indeed, at the same time, by his perfectly righteous, innocent, holy, and exemplary life, as well as satisfactory death, he hath set an all-perfect example of holiness and obedience to his father's will, with a compleat and perfect pattern of love to God and men, for the imitation of all his saints and people in every thing imitable, and the instruction of mankind to the end of time. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Eph. v. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 21. i. 16. 1 John ii. 6. iv. 10. John iii. 16. xiv. 15. xv. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Accordingly, our blessed Lord and Saviour being now employed in preaching his own Gospel, and in opening up the whole counsel of God, the whole mind and will of God, to men for their salvation, (for it was all given by him, through the Holy Ghost, John i. 18. Heb. i. 1, 3) he
called

called by a word Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother, and also James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, then a very young man, it would appear, all poor illiterate fishermen, Matt. iv. 18, 22.

After this, the evangelists tell us, he went up unto a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God; and when it was day, he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles, to attend him in his personal public ministry, preach his gospel, plant and establish churches, heal all manner of diseases, in his name cast out devils, and particularly, that each of them might not only be thus a minister of Christ, but also a living witness to the truth of his divine mission and character, as the Christ the son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world, to his doctrines and miracles, and the all of his religion. And as having all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, all gifts and graces necessary for himself, as the head of the new creation, and for the whole church of God, whether in heaven or in earth. He qualifies them for every part of their office, in an immediate, miraculous, and supernatural manner, and makes them all as polished shafts in his hand, through the Holy Ghost, with all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, and sends them forth in his name, cloathed with all his authority, as the very name Apostle bears; and therefore apostles, as apostles of Christ, never had, nor indeed among all the sons of men can have, any successors in office as apostles, excepting Matthias, who succeeded Judas the traitor, and was numbered with the apostles. Mark iii. 13, 19. Luke vi. 12, 16. Matt. v. 1. John i. 14, 41. ii. 2.

C H A P. V.

Upon the Doctrine and Miracles of Christ.

SOON after calling his apostles, and qualifying them in such a godlike manner, having not only clearly and fully opened up to the Gallileans the one and only way of eternal life,

life, and everlasting salvation for any sinner of mankind, and also healed every disease or ailment in mind or body he met with amongst them.

Zebulon and Issachar, according to a prophecy remitted by Moses, the man of God, before his death, They shall call the people unto the mountain, and there shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness, Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19. The divinely amiable, and altogether lovely Jesus, seeing the multitudes thus assembled, went up unto a mountain in Gallilee; and when he was set, as the great New Testament Prophet, and High-priest, and sole King in Zion, as the Prince of peace upon his throne, as a purifier of his own law from all the false glosses and absurd interpretations put upon it by the Jewish doctors and rabins, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Deut. xviii. 15, 19. Acts iii. 22, 23. Psa. ii. 6, 9. iv. 1. x. 4. Mal. iii. 3, 4.

His disciples, whom he had so lately chosen with others in great multitudes, it is likely, inclined both to hear and learn from him, came unto him. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, in eight several beatitudes, both what true happiness is; that it lies in the favour of God, through Christ, in his pure love, rich grace, free favour, and tender mercy in and through the Son of his love and bosom; and who of all mankind are only truly blessed and happy, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, or truly humble, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; begun in grace here, and consummate in glory hereafter. Blessed are they that mourn. the true mourners for sin, or in the furnace of sanctified affliction, for they shall be comforted with all the consolations which are in Christ, and with the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Blessed are the meek, such as are adorned with the meekness, the mildness, and the gentleness of Christ, and so of a truly christian and divine temper and composure of mind, and chearfully resigned to the will of God and providence as to all their trials and afflictions, whether in life or death, for they shall inherit the earth, all the good things of this life, in whatever measure and degree, infinite wisdom and goodness sees best for them; and that by faith, by promise, and with God's blessing as in Christ,

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Blessed

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, after Christ, and his imputed righteousness, which is always attended with implanted graces, with the all of inherent righteousness, or true gospel holiness, and as sincerely desire these as an hungry and thirsty man desires meat and drink, for they shall be filled, satisfied with God's favour as in Christ, and filled with all his fulness.

Blessed are the merciful, such as have obtained mercy of God as in Christ, and so are disposed to shew mercy to all in distress or misery, for they shall obtain mercy, more and more of the Father of mercies, of the God of love, and of all grace, through Christ, and even that compassion from their fellow-saints and men they would wish, if they need it.

Blessed are the pure in heart, such as have new hearts given to them, and right spirits put within them, and so are holy in heart and life, by a new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord, even unto good works, for they shall see God, see God as in Christ, with the two eyes of faith, and of spiritual understanding and divine discernment, even here in this life, and have the saving enjoyment of him both here and hereafter for ever.

Blessed are the peace-makers, all such as have peace with God through Christ, peace of conscience by the peace-speaking blood of Christ, and so are disposed to live in peace themselves, and so far as their influence can go to make and maintain peace amongst others; for they shall be called the children of God, being so God-like and Christ-like, and also acknowledged by God as such, and even esteemed so by others as they so evidently breathe the spirit, and walk in the steps of Christ; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep their hearts and minds through him.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, or lying, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you.

Blessed

Blessed are they which are persecuted by a wicked world for the sake of Christ and his righteousness, whether imputed or implanted, against whom wicked people have always been disposed to say all manner of evil falsely, knowing themselves to be lying, in contempt of Christ and the gospel, and because of the unlikeness of good people to themselves; rejoice and be exceeding glad, says the Son of God, to all such sufferers, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets before you, and indeed all good people. The children of the wicked one always in some measure thus persecuted the Saints and people of God; but they are still blessed, truly and greatly blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, with all its happiness and glory; both the kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter; with all the blessings, privileges, and advantages of the sons and children of God. Mark x. 29. 30. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7.

And therefore such, and such only, stand single and alone, truly blessed and happy of all mankind, says the Amen, the faithful and the true witness, who is love itself, grace and truth itself. Deut. xxxiii. 29. Psa. cxliv. 15. cxlvi. 5, 6. lxxxix. 15. Prov. iii. 13. John xiii. 17.

Thus the great teacher of mankind, both the law-giver and the law-fulfiller, perfectly explains his own law, clears it of all false glosses and absurd interpretations put upon it by the Jewish rabbins, and shews all the world that it was all over, and in every line, purely and only a law of love, one continued law of love. Matt. v. 6, 7. Chapters at large, xxii. 36, 40.

Thus Moses, the man of God, blessing the children of Israel before his death, more than fourteen hundred and eighty years before the event took place, sees Jesus Christ, the Christ of God, and the Saviour of the world, preaching his own gospel upon this mountain in Gallilee. Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19.

As also the prophet Isaiah, through the same Holy Ghost, greatly more than seven hundred years before. Isa. ix. 1, 2.

And therefore the holy scriptures are, and must be, and indeed only can be, the word of God, and all eternal truth;

and ought to be received by all mankind as such. John iii. 34. 1 Theff. ii. 13. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Pet. i. 21.

C H A P. VI.

The Life, Doctrine, and Miracles of Christ continued.

THUS the holy Jesus, by doctrine, by precept, as well as by example, taught us how to pray, how to live, and walk, and please God, and be approved of him through Christ: Having it always as a fixed principle, our constant and governing aim, to please God, and be approved of him, in and through the Son of his love and bosom. For he perfectly did his Father's will, and always pleased him. John iv. 34. Rom. xv. 3. Gal. i. 10. 1 John iii. 22. Mark vii. 37. Matt. iii. 17. vi. 9, 13. vii. 21.

Accordingly, coming to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up to read: For reading the holy scriptures was always a part of public religious worship since they were given. Thus, as he read Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, 3, he tells them, "This day the scripture is fulfilled in your ears." And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. Luke iv. 14, 22. Which also shews us the glorious truth and the infallible certainty of the word of God.

Thus we find him constantly going about and doing good; constantly, in a manner, employed in doing good either to the souls or bodies of men, and especially to their souls, as his principal business, as a Saviour, lay with the soul. And so he unweariedly went through city and country, preaching the blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel; these only words of eternal life and everlasting salvation for any sinner of mankind; opening the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf; loosing the tongue of the dumb, making the lame man leap as a hart, cleansing lepers, casting out devils

devils wherever he met with them, healing the most inveterate disease, yea, all manner of diseases, by a word, or willing it, or by a touch of his hand or garment, or with or without means, or even by seemingly contrary means, as he pleased. And, when necessary, feeding thousands by a miracle: First, five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves and two small fishes; with twelve baskets full of fragments that remained, John vi. 9, 13. And then, four thousand men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few small fishes; and seven baskets full remained, Matt. xv. 32, 38. Mark viii. 5, 9. Commanding the most impetuous of elements, as the winds and the seas, by a word; yea, universal nature obedient at his nod; and raising the very dead to life, as he that runs may read all over the four gospels. A history unerring Wisdom and eternal Truth has given us of him by means of four evangelists, published both to the church and to the world, with all the authority of heaven. Acts. i. 1, 3. Matt. ix. 20, 22. xiv. 36. viii. 26, 27. xviii. 11. xi. 4, 6. xii. 22. Mark iv. 41. vii. 37. Luke xix. 10. vii. 14, 22, 23. John xi. 43, 44.

Thus as the holy Jesus is the only perfect character that ever appeared in the world since sin entered into it, so he is the most amiable, gracious, glorious, and divinely endearing character; and the God evidently shone through the man in all he either said or did. Being at the same time a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and bearing the griefs, and carrying the sorrows, of all wherever he came.

As he had cheerfully undertaken the redemption of souls, of precious and immortal souls, by his blood; yea, by power and conquest, as well as by price and purchase; in the counsels of peace from eternity, before time; and the Father had as willingly laid on him, by legal imputation, the iniquities of all his people, that is, of all such of mankind as should ever in good earnest come to him in his Son, and so obtain mercy and find grace, special mercy and saving grace, in his sight. Zech. vi. 13. ix. 11. Psal. xl. 7, 10. lxxxix. 19. cx. 3. Isa. ix. 6, 7. liii. 1, 12. Jer. xxiii. 6. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9. ix. 26, 28. x. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18, 21.

Thus

Thus we find the amiable and divine Jesus sending forth first his twelve apostles, and then also other seventy of his disciples, by two and two, in his name, by his spirit and power, and cloathed with all his authority, to preach the gospel, heal all manner of diseases, cast out devils, and raise the very dead to life. And they return to him, saying, they had done as he commanded them, and the very devils were subject to them: Which also proclaims aloud to all the world, that he is the true God and eternal life; that his religion is all over divine, and his word eternal truth. 1 John v. 7, 12, 20. Matt. x. 1, 8. Mark iii. 13, 19. Luke ix. 1. x. 10. i. 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9, 10, 14.

But as he came perfectly to do his father's will, and fully to finish the work he had given him to do; so, according to Old Testament prophecies concerning him, when he should become a preacher of his own gospel, (Psal. xlix. 1, 8. lxxviii. 1, 7) we find him frequently teaching and preaching, and speaking to the people in parables, which he explained in private to his apostles and disciples.

Which is a manner of teaching us heavenly, spiritual, and divine things, yea, the great things of his law, and the glorious things of his gospel, by means of earthly and sensible representations or similitudes, that are familiar and well known with men.

Which is a method of teaching in a manner peculiar to the Bible, the word of God; or at least, it would appear, taught the world by it: And which pleases and instructs, edifies and delights, at the same time. And therefore parables are never to be strained, forced, or wire-drawn; but always to be understood, or taken, in their plainest, most natural, and obvious sense. Matt. xiii. Mark iv. chap. Luke viii. 10. xii. 41. John xvi. 25, 29.

Which teaches us the incomparable excellency of the divine teaching; so that God, in his word, often speaks as loud to us in things as by words: As also the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God. John iii. 34. 1 Thess. ii. 13. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

C H A P. VII.

*Christ's Transfiguration, triumphant Entrance into Jerusalem,
and his Life continued.*

MOREOVER, in the course of the glorious life of Christ, amongst many other divine, wonderful, and astonishing things, all for the glory of God and the good of mankind, and which evidently shew him to be the Christ the Son of the living God and the Saviour of the world, we find a full, particular, and distinct account of his transfiguration.

We are told he went up into a high mountain to pray, most likely mount Tabor, in Gallilee, and took with him Peter, James, and John, as chosen witnesses of this divine scene.

And, as he prayed, the fashion, the form, the visage, or appearance of his countenance, was altered, and became very different, and his raiment shone forth also white and glittering. So much of that glory with which he is now clothed in heaven, and in which he will appear as Lord Judge of the world at the last day, broke forth upon him, and the God evidently shone through the man. And at his prayer, it would appear also, the body of Moses was raised up, united to his glorified spirit, and clothed with glory and immortality. And so it is said, Behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, as already glorified persons, both invested with the glory of heaven: And spake of his death, with the grand ends of it, or his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Here Moses, the lawgiver; Elijah, the law-recoverer; Christ, the law-fulfiller, all met upon this mountain: The grand subject of conversation was the death and sufferings of Christ, with his following glory. Here, amidst all this glory, the apostles, through weakness and infirmity, were heavy with sleep: But when awoke, they both saw and knew Christ in this his glory, and Moses and Elias, as glorified persons,

persons, talking with him. And not then knowing the grand design of this great meeting, they wished to make three tabernacles; one for Christ, one for Moses, one for Elias. But the grand ends of this glorious interview being already served, behold a cloud overshadows them, and a voice comes out of the cloud from God the Father, in the excellent glory, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.

Thus this grand interview, amongst other glorious ends and purposes it was designed of God to serve, no doubt was to prepare and encourage the innocent human nature of Christ for sufferings and death.

For the Holy Jesus was soon about, through the Holy Ghost, or by his own act as God, to offer up his whole human nature, soul and body, with the all of his obedience and suffering, upon the golden altar of his divine nature, as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling favour to God the Father, as a compleat satisfaction, an all-perfect atonement for the sins of all his people. Heb. ix. 14. x. 14. Eph. v. 1, 2.

And no doubt it was a grand preparation of the three apostles of Christ, as sons of thunder, for work and warfare; as ministers of, and witnesses for God and his Christ, both in life and death. Matt. xvii. 1, 8. Mark ix. 1, 8. Luke ix. 28, 36. 2 Pet. i. 16, 18. Acts i. 22. iv. 33. xxvi. 16.

Thus also, in the course of the life and ministry of the Holy Jesus, according to Old Testament predictions concerning him, we find him riding in state and triumph into Jerusalem upon an ass, upon a colt, the foal of an ass, as the sole king in Zion, the great New Testament Prophet, and High Priest, in the character of Emmanuel, as both God and man in one person, the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world.

And the disciples put their cloaths upon the ass and the colt, and set him on the colt. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, others cut down branches of palm-trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes

tudes that went before, and that also followed after, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord Jehovah, to save us. Hosanna in the highest; God's great Saviour, and his great salvation, be known, and be extolled in the loftiest strains and highest accents all over the world; yea, both in heaven and in earth. May his kingdom and reign of grace extend over the world, and be lasting in the earth, as the sun in the heavens; and so long and prosperous, extending from sea to sea, while sun and moon endure, even until this reign of grace here issues, in the kingdom and reign of glory for ever and ever hereafter. These are the very words of David. Psa. cxviii. 25, 26.

Thus the Holy Jesus takes possession of the temple as his own house, turns all the buyers and sellers out of it, overthrows the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; telling them his house, as a figure of himself, viz. as the true tabernacle and temple, the true mercy-seat and throne of grace, was a house of prayer for all nations, but they had made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came unto him in the temple, and he healed them all. Gen. xlix. 10, 11. Isa. xl. 1, 3, 9, 11. lxii. 10, 12. Zech. ix. 9. Matt. xxi. 1, 16. Mark xi. 1, 18. Luke xix. 28, 48. John xii. 12, 16. ii. 19, 21.

C H A P. VIII.

The consolatory Sermon and intercessatory Prayer of Christ a little before his Death.

THUS the Holy Jesus, being both transfigured, and having made his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, as King of kings, and Lord of lords; as possessed of all power and authority, might, and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth; and having well nigh fulfilled his glorious and divine ministry, as a preacher of his own gospel, as he was going up to Jerusalem to keep his last passover, he tells his apostles and disciples of the manner and circumstances of his death, he

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should be betrayed by one of them into the hands of the chief priests and scribes, and they should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him, and the third day he should rise again; he should be denied by another of them, and forsaken of them all. All of which prophecies and predictions, whether from his own gracious lips, or by Old Testament prophets, were punctually, literally, and exactly fulfilled. Which teaches us, that he is really and truly God, and possessed of omniscience and every divine perfection and excellency. Matt. xx. 17, 19. xxvi. 47, 50, 56. xxvii. 1, 4. xix. 3, 5. Mark x. 32, 34. xiv. 43, 46. xv. 1, 25. Luke xviii. 31. xxxiv. 22. i. 6, 47, 48, 54, 71. xxiii. at large. John xiii. 21, 26. xviii. 1, 8, 12, 14, 28. xix. 1, 18.

Accordingly the amiable and divine Jesus having foretold his death, and all the circumstances attending it, that when his apostles and disciples should see all these things fulfilled to a tittle, they might believe that he was the Christ, the true Messiah, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world. The deepest sorrow, and the most piercing anxiety and distress, filled their souls, and perplexed their minds, to think that he should die, and die the cursed, painful, and ignominious death of the cross. All their hopes and expectations, they thought, would be over at once, and for ever buried in oblivion in his grave with him; upon which their dear Lord and Master sets himself on purpose, to administer divine comforts and eternal consolations to them, in the xiv. xv. xvi. chapters of John's gospel. Enough to support and comfort them in their then circumstances, and indeed in all circumstances, whether in life or death, as the dignified sons and children of God. He shews them that his birth, life, and death, exhibit to all the world, a perfect pattern of love to God and men. And, therefore, as Lord of life, Lord of death, sole Lord of both worlds, (both of this visible and material one) and also of the spiritual, the invisible, and eternal world. He commands them as their Lord and Master, with all the love and bowels, the majesty and mercy, the compassion and authority, of a Divine Saviour and Redeemer; saying, Let not your heart be troubled, unduly troubled at any

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rate; every Saint amongst you believes in God, believe also in me as your Lord and Saviour; as an all-perfect, all-sufficient Saviour. For I have power to lay down my life, and also to take it up again; and in my Father's house are many mansions, or eternal habitations; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. I will soon see you again after my death and resurrection, as an exalted and risen Saviour; and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man, no person, no thing shall take from you. And therefore be strong in the faith, giving glory to God; live by faith, by promise, by prayer, in a constant and an entire subjection to and dependence upon me your Lord and Saviour. And because, and as I live, ye shall live also; and hold the all of your life and happiness, both in grace here, and in glory hereafter; by the very same tenure, I hold all my glory and honour, as Mediator and Saviour.

Yea, it is fit and expedient for you that I go away; for by dying I will destroy sin and death, and all the works of the devil; and make a full and final purchase of all life and happiness for you; and also take possession of heaven, both for myself as Mediator and Saviour, and also for all mine, to a man. Heb. ix. 24.

And what is still more, after my death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, according to the promise, I will send you the good and holy spirit of God, in an extraordinary manner and measure, with all his miraculous powers, supernatural gifts and graces, as your divine comforter, almighty supporter, and unerring leader and guide, by and according to the word of God, through life and death. And he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, and shall abide with you for ever.

And thus having administered to them enough to support and comfort them in their then circumstances, and indeed all the Saints and people of God, in all circumstances, as the sons and heirs of God, through Christ. John xiv. xv. xvi. chapters.

He concludes this divine consolatory sermon with his intercessatory prayer, chap. xvii. (for the preaching of God's word should always be backed and watered with true christian prayer) in which he at once gives both the church and world a truly grand, and divinely important and interesting view, both of the nature and manner of his all-glorious, all-powerful, and ever-prevalent mediation and intercession in heaven; all of which is abundantly obvious from the above sermon and prayer.

C H A P. IX.

Upon the Death of Christ.

THUS having given a few hints of the life of Christ, we shall next (God willing and assisting) consider his death.

As the birth, with the life and the death of Christ, is the most amazing scene, and these are the grandest and the most divinely important and interesting events that ever did or will open upon the world: So the person, nature, and offices of Christ, as Mediator and Saviour; his character as Emmanuel, God with us, God manifested in the flesh, God in, with, and amongst men, is evidently the first and the prime constitution in all the economy of God. Isa. ix. 6, 7. vii. 14. Psal. cx. 1, 4. cxlv 5, 7. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxi. 22. John i. 1, 5, 14, 16, 17, 18. iii. 16. 1 Tim. i. 15. iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9. x. 5, 11, 12, 20. Eph. i. 19, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 13, 19. ii. 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 18, 21.

And therefore as his birth and life, so also his death, which are all of a piece, and a great whole indeed, is, and must be, big with divine instructions of the very last moment, and eternal importance to us and all mankind.

For if death in general is designed of God as a great teacher of all the living, how much more the death of his own dear Son? Who, as the great New Testament High-priest, through the eternal Spirit, cheerfully offered himself, his whole human nature, soul, and body, with the all of his obedience and suffering, upon the golden altar of his divine

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nature, as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God the Father; a compleat satisfaction, a perfect atonement, a full propitiation for the sins of all his people; a compleat, all-perfect, all-satisfying ransom for precious and immortal souls: That whosoever of mankind should, by grace, believe on him as a Saviour, might not perish, but have eternal, everlasting life; or, that being made perfect by sufferings, he might become the author, the declared author of eternal life and everlasting salvation to all them that obey him, by grace believe on and obey him; or, that by this one offering he might for ever perfect all them that are sanctified. First justified before God by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so sanctified by his word and Spirit; as all the saints and people of God indeed are to a man. For without justification before God, by the mediatorial and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, and also a new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord even unto good works, or regeneration by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, there neither is nor can be any sanctification or true gospel holiness in any sinner of mankind. John i. 12, 13, 33. vi. 6, 63. Rom. viii. 7, 9. 1 Cor. ii. 12. xiv. 3. Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17. Micah vi. 8. In which one offering or sacrifice of Christ, he was priest, altar, and sacrifice, all in one. Heb. ix. 13, 14. ii. 10. v. 9. ix. 26. x. 14. John iii. 16. Eph. i. 7. v. 1. 2. 1 John iv. 10. ii. 2. Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. 1 Pet. i. 18, 21.

A new thing in the earth, and which none but he, who is both God and man in one person, could ever possibly do or effect. A creature, as a creature, from the highest to the lowest, was altogether incapable of it. John i. 1, 5, 14, 16, 18. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxi. 22, Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7. 1 Tim. i. 15. iii. 16. 1 John iv. 10. v. 11, 12, 20.

Thus, if any soul of mankind was to be saved, it must be in a way worthy of God, consistent with his justice and holiness; that is, only in and through his Son, by his holy birth, righteous life, and satisfactory death. For without shedding of blood there is no remission: And a God all mercy would be a God unjust. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9. ix. 22, 26. x. 14. 1 John iii. 8, 49. x. 22. Psal. lxxxv. 10, 13.

But

But the glory of God, the honour of his Son, the praise of free grace, was the great and the last end of the death of Christ, and indeed of all God has either said or done by his Son.

And next to, and in subordination to that, the holiness and happiness of men. All such of mankind as ever did, do, or shall in good earnest come to God in his Son, or obtain mercy and find grace, special mercy and saving grace in his sight, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. x. 31. vi. 19, 20. xv. 58. Prov. xvi. 4. John iii. 16. xiv. 6, 37. Heb. xi. 24, 27. Tit. ii. 11, 14. iii. 4, 7. Rom. xi. 36. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi. 9, 13.

Thus Christ died, and also rose again, that he might fulfil God's eternal purpose of grace in him, as to the salvation and recovery of lost sinners; that he might perfectly do his Father's will, and fully finish the work of man's redemption; that grand, that glorious, and God-like work, the eternal salvation and everlasting happiness of precious and immortal souls; the very least part of which, he that was God as well as man, yea, both God and man in one person, could only ever possibly effect. Zech. vi. 12, 13. ix. 11. Jer. xxxi. 3, 22. Psal. xl. 6, 8. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9, 10. v. 10, 14. John xvii. 4. iv. 34. v. 30. xix. 20. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7. Matt. i. 23.

But besides, Christ not only died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; but that, by dying, he might destroy sin and death, and all the works of the devil; effectually remove every bar, let, or hinderance, that stood in the way of any returning sinner to God; that having perfectly fulfilled all righteousness, and so made a full and final purchase of all life and happiness; yea, perfectly fulfilled the terms of eternal life and happiness for all such of mankind as ever did or should in good earnest come to God the Father in and by him. An infinitely wise, good, and gracious God, might be fully and gloriously proclaimed all over the everlasting gospel, to all the world, as love itself, grace and truth itself, to all that come to him in his Son, of whatever nation under heaven.

Thus

Thus the birth, life, and the death of Christ, not only exhibit a perfect pattern of love to God and man; but proclaim aloud to all mankind, in the very lines of the blood of Christ, God is love; God, as in Christ, is love; rich in grace, abundant in mercy, to all that come to him in his Son, or to all the true and sincere seekers of his face.

And all mankind, without exception or distinction, wherever the gospel of the grace of God comes, and is known, are invited, called, and commanded to come to him as such.

And all that come to him in his Son, by his Spirit, according to the word of God, are ever graciously accepted of him. John iii. 16, 19, 30. 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 John iii. 8. iv. 9, 10. Tit. ii. 11, 14. iii. 4, 7. Heb. xii. 10. v. 9. ix. 26. x. 14. Rom. iii. 21, 26. iv. 4, 8. Psal. xl. 6, 8. John iv. 34. v. 30. xvii. 4. 2 Cor. v. 18, 21. Prov. viii. 4. Isa. lv. 5, 7. Matt. vii. 7, 11. xi. 28, 30. Acts xiii. 38, 39. xvii. 30. 1 John iii. 23. Rev. xxii. 17.

Moreover, Christ died the cursed, painful, and ignominious death of the cross, that he might fulfil all Old Testament prophecies and predictions, types and figures of him, both as a suffering and an exalted and risen Saviour; and unanswerably demonstrate to all the world the truth and certainty of his divine mission and character, his doctrine and miracles, his word and religion; yea, that he might make the grave a bed of rest for the bodies of saints, until the resurrection of the just; and, particularly, that he might thus enter fully upon all his glory and honour, as Mediator and Saviour. 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. Rev. xiii. 8. 1 Cor. v. 7. Col. ii. 17. Heb. vi. 17, 18. vii. 19. ix. 24. Matt. iii. 15. v. 18. 1 John v. 7, 8. Tit. i. 2. Luke ix. 35. 2 Pet. i. 16, 18. John viii. 36. Acts xiii. 38, 39. Isa. lvii. 2. Luke xxiv. 25, 26.

B O O K V.

UPON THE RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, EXALTATION,
AND GLORY OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN; AND HIS COM-
ING AGAIN TO JUDGE THE WORLD AT THE LAST
DAY.

C H A P. I.

Upon the Resurrection of Christ.

BUT after these grand, glorious, and divinely-important Bible Principles, to be known and believed of all men, another truly grand, essential, and divinely-important principle of Christianity is, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, early on the morning of the third day after his death, with which one doctrine, the all of Christianity, at once stands or falls; and which doctrine all Saints indeed believe with all their hearts, yea, humbly boast and glory of, and rejoice and triumph in. Luke xxiv. 34.

A grand fact, indeed, a glorious and divinely-important truth of God; which, as the all of the truth, as in Jesus, stands clothed with all that divine light and evidence, the very nature and importance of the thing requires, all over the New Testament.

Thus the evangelist Luke tells us in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power, and all the authority of God, and of his Christ, that the two disciples going to Emmaus, to whom the Lord Jesus Christ made himself known, by the breaking of bread and blessing it, returned with joy and haste to Jerusalem, saying to their brethren assembled there, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. Luke xxiv. 34. xiii. 33, 35.

And the great apostle Paul, in the same name, and with all the same authority, shews the believing Romans, and by them

them, all men and christians to the end of time, that the Lord Jesus Christ was declared, fully declared and manifested, to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his glorious resurrection from the dead. Rom. i. 4.

The four evangelists, by the inspiration of the Almighty, by the eternal Spirit of the eternal God, as witnesses chosen of God on purpose, jointly and severally attest this comfortable and divine doctrine, that the Lord is risen indeed, and with him the hopes and happiness of all the saints and people of God to a man.

And that early on the first day of the week, or in the morning of the first christian sabbath; from which grand event the sabbath of christians bears date all over the New Testament, and in the annals of the church, and uniform practice of christians, Matt. xxviii. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv. John xx. xxi. chapters at large: Yea, the same day in which the Lord Jesus Christ, with infinite ease, arose from the dead, and broke all the bands of death, and the barriers of the grave, (for every thing must be equally easy to Omnipotence) he seems to have appeared five times to his disciples and friends.

First, to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. Mark xvi. 9.

Secondly, to the religious women altogether, returning from the sepulchre with the joyful news to the apostles and disciples of Christ. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.

Thirdly, to the two disciples going to Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 34.

To the apostle, Peter, alone, it would appear. Luke xxiv. 34.

To the apostles and disciples of Christ the same evening, Thomas being absent, John xx. 19. Insomuch, that not a single soul of them could entertain the least doubt when he made himself known to them (whom they knew so well before) but that it was he, their dear Lord and Master, their divine Saviour, the Christ, the Son of the living God. And so, that he was risen indeed; and with him all their hopes and happiness, for time and eternity; as their whole

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life, doctrine, and miracles, and also their triumphant deaths, uniformly and unanswerably demonstrate to all the world. Luke xxiv. 26, 34. Rom. i. 4. Col. iii. 1, 3. 1 Pet. i. 3, 12. 2 Pet. i. 16, 21. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8.

And besides, there seems to be other six special, signal, and distinct appearances to his apostles and disciples, at different times and places, after his glorious resurrection, marked in the sacred history, whatever might be otherwise. For the apostle, John, supposes, that if every thing which Jesus did had been written, the world itself could not have contained the books. John xx. 30, 31. xxi. 25.

One of these appearances was on a mountain of Gallilee, most likely mount Tabor, where he was transfigured to above five hundred brethren at once, which he had told them of, both before his death and after his resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 6. Mark xiv. 28. xvi. 7.

Eight days after his resurrection, to sanction the second christian sabbath the more, to all his apostles and disciples, Thomas being present. John xx. 26, 29.

At the sea of Tiberias, to seven of them a-fishing. John xxi. 1, 14.

To eleven of them upon a mountain in Gallilee. Matt. xxviii. 16, 20.

To James alone. 1 Cor. xv. 7.

And then in a very open and glorious manner, before all his apostles and disciples, upon the mount of Olives, at his ascension. 1 Cor. xv. 7. Acts i. 9, 12. Luke xxiv. 50, 53.

Thus it would appear there were eleven different appearances of Christ to his apostles and disciples, at least, betwixt his resurrection and ascension; besides his appearing as an exalted and risen Saviour, to Stephen, at his death; to Paul, at his conversion; and John, in the Revelation. Acts vii. 56. ix. 17. Rev. i. 10. iv. 2.

The holy angels that attended him at his birth, his temptation in the wilderness, and agony in the garden, attend him in his resurrection, and assure his disconsolate disciples that he was risen from the dead, and invite them to come and see the place where the Lord lay. Matt. xxviii. 1, 6.

iv. 11.

iv. 11. Mark xvi. 5, 10. Luke xxiv. 1, 8. xxiii. 2, 9, 14. xxii. 43. John xx. 11, 12, 17, 18.

Yea, the Jewish rulers, the very crucifiers of the Lord of glory, with the Roman guard, and Pilate that condemned him, as Roman Governor, in the over-ruling Providence of God, here give in their voice. At their joint advice, the sepulchre is made sure, the stone is sealed, and a watch set: Whereas, at the approach of the earthquake, and the appearance of the angel, who rolled back the great stone, and sat upon it, the keepers did quake, and became as dead men; and fled with speed to Jerusalem, and told the chief priests all the things which were done. Matt. xxvii. 62, 66. xxviii. 1, 4, 11, 15. And so that Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, was risen indeed. And Judas, that betrayed our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, here also bears ample testimony to his divine mission and character.

He was called to be an apostle, attended Christ's personal ministry so long, and carried the bag as their common treasurer; and, no doubt, both preached the gospel to others, and wrought miracles in Christ's name; but was still destitute of real grace in his heart, and real union with, and saving interest in the Son of God. And however wicked, at the expence of his life, and indeed his all, as it were, through the very loins of the devil attests the innocence, the character, and office of Christ; saying, "I have sinned, and betrayed innocent blood:" And took back the thirty pieces of silver, in value about our thirty half-crowns, and threw them down in the temple, and went and hanged himself: Which price and use, to buy the potters' field, was foretold, by a venerable Old Testament prophet, more than six hundred years before the event; as Judas, both as to character and office, was described by David more than a thousand years before: Which teaches us the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God. Zech. xi. 12, 13. Psal. xli. 9. lxix. 25. Matt. xxvii. 3, 9. Acts i. 15, 20.

Thus the divinely important and glorious doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (with which one doctrine the all of our hopes and happiness as men and Christians necessarily stand connected) is abundantly confirmed

by witnesses chosen of God on purpose, the best of men, and the first of christians, who had every opportunity of being competent judges; and willingly forewent their worldly all, and their very life, for the grand objects of faith in a once crucified, but now an exalted and risen Saviour.

By the testimony of holy angels; and, indeed, by all the effects and consequences of the death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation and glory of Christ, as the power of the love and the life of Christ; with all the miraculous powers, supernatural gifts and graces of the good and Holy Spirit of God, in the apostolic age.

And, indeed, the power of his love and life, his word, grace, and spirit, in all real saints and sincere christians ever since, to this present moment.

A method less liable to objection, a plan more convincing, and better calculated to gain belief, than if he had arose before the greatest uninformed multitude, or any other way man can think of. Acts i. 1, 5. iv. 33. v. 32. 1 John v. 10.

C H A P. II.

Upon the Ascension of Christ.

BUT as the holy Jesus was born, lived, and died, and also rose again, in the character of Mediator and Saviour; Emmanuel, God with us; or as both God and man in one person: (However, as God, he was infinitely exalted above all sorrow or suffering, and could only suffer as man in the least degree; for there are no degrees, nor indeed can be none, in a Being of infinite perfection. Job xi. 7. xxvi. 14. Psal. cxxxix. 6. cxlvii. 5. Exod. iii. 14) So he ascended heaven in the same amiable, gracious, glorious, and divinely endearing character.

After he had given his apostles and friends the fullest assurances, even by many infallible signs and proofs, that he was risen from the dead, and become the author, the declared author of eternal life and everlasting salvation to them,

them, and all such of mankind as should ever, by grace, believe on and obey him; and also given them all necessary instructions and directions as to the kingdom of God among men, that reign of light, love and life, grace and truth, righteousness, peace, and holiness.

He was just about to establish in such a glorious manner in the hearts and souls, over the lips and lives, of men, by the power of his word, grace, and spirit; by means of his ordinances and providences, his works and ways. And particularly commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, until they had received the Holy Ghost in all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, according to the promise of the Father, and which ye have heard of me, and which not many days hence I will send upon you.

And ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost, and endued with power from on high, as chosen vessels, as polished shafts in my hand, to preach my gospel, and be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

I say, after having thus assembled and addressed all his apostles and disciples in general, and given them all necessary orders, he led them out as far as to Bethany, which signifies the house of sorrow, a village or town nigh to Jerusalem to the east of it, adjoining the Mount of Olives, about fifteen furlongs, nigh two miles off, where he had often resorted, raised Lazarus, when dead, to life, by a word; begun his triumph into Jerusalem, and endured his agony in the garden. Here, according to an Old Testament prophecy, Zech. xiv. 4, That his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives in that day he begins his ascension to heaven. And when he had thus gone upon their head, assembled in a body, and led them out from Jerusalem all the way to Bethany, he lift up his hands, as the great New Testament High Priest, yea, as Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, and Head over all things to his church, and blessed them, blessed them with all heavenly, spiritual, and divine blessings in him; yea, not only pronounced, but made them blessed.

And as he thus blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, his whole human nature, soul and

and body, in the character of Mediator and Saviour, as both God and man in one person.

He ascended heaven by his own act as God, or by the joint act of the Father and the Holy Ghost, and was set down on the right-hand of the Majesty in the heavens, as an exalted Prince and Saviour, an enthroned Redeemer. For, says he himself, I and my Father are one. John x. 30.

And it is also said, there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. 1 John v. 7.

And as the Holy Jesus thus ascended, and a cloud received him out of their sight, they all jointly and devoutly worship him as God, as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world; still gazing and looking up stedfastly towards heaven as he went up, until thus addressed by two angels from heaven, sent by their ascending Lord and Master on purpose, "Ye men of Gallilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."

And then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Acts i. 1, 14. Luke xxiv. 49, 53. Heb. i. 1, 3, 4, 14, 16, 17, 24, 25. ix. 24. x. 19, 23. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20. Mark xvi. 19, 20. John xxi. 25. Psa. xvi. 9, 11. lxviii. 18, 20.

Thus as the Lord Jesus Christ was born into the world, lived, and died to bless his people, and so fulfilled all righteousness, and of course made a full and a final purchase of all life and happiness for them. And so as an instruction for all men, and much to the comfort and consolation of all sincere Christians to the end of time, he parts with his apostles and disciples blessing—blessing them as he ascended heaven. Luke xxiv. 51.

And so ascending heaven in the character of Mediator, as the covenant-head and surety of all real Saints and sincere Christians whatever, as their living and life-giving head, and representative

representative in the new, the everlasting, and well-ordered covenant. He actually took possession of heaven both for himself as Mediator and Saviour, and also for all his.

And therefore as really and truly as the Lord Jesus Christ is already in heaven, so certainly shall all his Saints and people be, in due time, advanced to heaven with him.

And he thus ascended heaven, Saints on earth worshipping him, and blessing and praising God for him; Saints in heaven, even all the numerous hosts of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, singing and shouting to, rejoicing and triumphing in him, as a once crucified, but now an exalted Prince and Saviour. Casting down all their crowns of glory before him, worshipping and adoring him with the most profound reverence and veneration, with the most sublime and exalted devotion. Saints singing unto him that has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and his Christ. Angels and authorities and powers; yea, all persons and things, whether in heaven or in earth, being made subject to him. John i. 14. Eph. i. 19, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10, 15. Heb. i. 1, 3, 9, 14, 24. 1 Tim i. 15. iii. 16. Psa. cx. 1, 4. xlvii. 5. ix. 68. xviii. 20. Luke xxiv. 52, 53. Isa. lxiii. 1, 4. Heb. i. 6, 8, 9, 10, 14. John xiv. 1, 3, 17, 24. Rev. i. 5, 6. iii. 21. iv. 11.

C H A P. III.

Upon the Exaltation and Glory of Christ in Heaven.

THUS having given a short scriptural view of the ascension of Christ to heaven, we shall next, God willing and assisting, endeavour to consider his exaltation and glory there.

And he lives a life of the most consummate and exalted glory and honour in heaven; as God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and also as Mediator and Saviour; being clothed with all his own glory in that amiable and divine character, with the glory of the Father, invested with all

all the power and authority, might and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth; with all gifts and graces necessary for himself, as the head of the new creation, and for the whole church of God, whether militant upon earth, or triumphant in heaven. As the living and life-giving head to, and the ruling and governing head in, and over his whole church; and also head over all things to his church; having the great volume of the universe, with the whole kingdom of providence, every moment in his hand; angels and Saints, All-Saints, whether in heaven or in earth, constantly worshipping and adoring him, with genuine piety, the profoundest reverence and veneration, with the most sublime and exalted devotion. John i. 1. iv. 14. xiv. 1, 16, 17. Heb. i. 1, 3, 6, 10. xiv. 9, 12, 14, 24. Eph. i. 10, 11, 19, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 10, 11. Matt. iv. 10. Luke iv. 8. Rev. i. 5, 6. iv. 11, 15. iii. 4, 21, 22, 23.

Thus as the Holy Jesus is made both Lord and Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, and is exalted at the Father's right-hand, as a Prince upon his throne, to the highest favour, honour, power, and glory in heaven.

So amidst all this supreme glory and honour, this divine majesty and dignity, he still continues to live a life of office in heaven, in the name and behalf of all his Saints and people upon earth; ever personating and representing them, and also managing and agenting all their affairs, interests, and concerns at the court of heaven, by his all-perfect, all-powerful, and ever-prevalent mediation and intercession there. Ruling by law and love, by his word, grace, and spirit, in the hearts and souls, over the lips and lives of all real Saints and sincere Christians whatever, and by his special, holy, and adorable providence over them and all their concerns, whether for life or death, time or eternity.

And also with the same infinite ease, ever, over, and amidst all his and his people's enemies. Psa. cx. 1, 4. ii. 6. ciii. 19. Acts ii. 36. iii. 22, 23. v. 31, 32. Heb. i. 1, 3, 8. vii. 24, 25. ix. 24. Matt. x. 29, 31. iii. 17. xxviii. 18, 20. Luke ix. 35. John xiv. 13, 14. xi. 42. viii. 36. Rom. viii. 31, 39. ii. 6, 11.

Thus

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ shall live and reign at the Father's right-hand, in all his glory, until the mystery of grace is finished, and the cope-stone is laid upon the whole building of mercy; angels and saints singing and shouting, Grace, grace, unto it: And all the vessels of mercy, or all such of mankind as by grace, in good earnest, come to God in the Son of his love, are actually brought home to God by the blood of his Son; first, in grace here, and then in glory in heaven. And every person or thing that stands up in opposition to him, all over the universe, be made and become as his footstool. Psal. cx. 1, 2, 3.

C H A P. IV.

Upon the general and last Judgment.

AND then he will come again in the same glory at the last day, cloathed with his own glory as Mediator and Saviour, and with the glory of the Father; attended with his holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, the second time without sin, unto salvation; no more as a sacrifice for sin, but as sole Lord Judge of the world, whether angels or men, saints or sinners, the quick or the dead. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and the dead in Christ shall rise first, at the sound of the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised up. For how easy must it be with that God that made a world of nothing by the word of his power at first; only spoke, and the stupendous fabric of the universe stood forth in all its beauty and perfection, and every moment upholds, rules, and governs it, to raise the dead?

The bodies of all the saints and people of God will be raised up, each of them like unto Christ's most glorious body, and re-united to their glorified spirits; and constitute the same identical, individual persons, as here, to eternal ages.

All such saints, indeed, as are then found alive upon the earth, will not die, but undergo a sudden change, something

thing like or equivalent to death, to fit them for immortality; as flesh and blood, as here, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," saith the apostle Paul. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 57. And then the bodies of all the wicked of the world, that have lived and died out of Christ, graceless, godless, christless, shall be raised up by the power and providence of Almighty God, to shame, to misery, and everlasting contempt; and re-united to their wretched, miserable, and undone souls, and brought before the judgment-seat of Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." 2 Cor. v. 10. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Rev. xx. 12.

And then the great Judge of the world, (as he already tells us himself, Matt. xxv. 31, 41) shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the King of nations, King of saints, unto them on his right-hand, all such as are justified by his blood and righteousness, and sanctified by his word, grace, and Spirit; and so found them in real union and of one spirit with him, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," viz. heaven, in all its happiness and glory, to eternal ages. And then shall he say to them on his left-hand, viz. a whole ungodly world, all such of mankind as are then found unjustified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and unregenerated and un sanctified by the word and Spirit of the Lord, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," the wrath and curse of God represented by fire, "prepared for the devil and his angels," Satan and all his servants.

And these, all these, shall go away into everlasting punishment, but all the righteous into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 46. The one being as happy, and the other as miserable, as their very natures are capable of, to eternal ages. Acts xvii. 31. Jude, verses 14, 15. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xiv. 1. xx.

12, 15. Heb. ix. 27. Rom. ii. 6, 11. 2 Theff. i. 7, 10.
2 Tim. iv. 6, 8. Mark ix. 41, 48. xvi. 11.

That all the evil angels will be consigned by him, in the last judgment, to everlasting destruction and endless perdition, in his awful, but righteous judgment, is equally obvious. Jude, ver. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 4.

As to all the elect or good angels, as they are already confirmed by Jesus Christ in all their holiness and happiness, and also never sinned, it is not likely that they will be judged in the general judgment of men and evil angels at the last day. 1 Tim. v. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Heb. i. 6, 8, 14. Eph. i. 20, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 15, 19. But the day will declare this best.

But after time and all times, things are over, as the Lord Jesus Christ will then deliver up his mediatorial kingdom, as to all eternal administration of it, by word and ordinances, as here; yet he will still remain the eternal band of union, and glorious medium and mean of communion, between God and all his saints and people in heaven, in glory to all the ages of an endless eternity. Psal. cx. 4. lxxxix. 29. Isa. ix. 6, 7. xxvi. 4. Jer. xxiii. 6. Dan. iv. 3. vii. 27. John xiv. 3, 6, 19. vi. 37. Luke xii. 32. xxii. 29. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. John xvii. 24. Rev. iii. 21. xxi. 3. xxii. 23. 1 Theff. iv. 17.



B O O K VI.

UPON THAT DIVINE LIGHT AND EVIDENCE WITH WHICH
THE DIVINE MISSION AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST,
AS A SAVIOUR, AND THE ALL OF CHRISTIANITY,
STANDS CLOATHED IN THE SACRED HISTORY
OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

C H A P. I.

*Upon the first and second Chapters, and particularly on the
Day of Pentecost.*

THUS having given a few hints of the resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and glory of Christ in heaven, and his coming again to judge the world at the last day; we shall next endeavour, through the divine assistance, to consider a little that grand, that glorious, that divine and god-like light and evidence with which his divine mission and character, as Mediator and Saviour; as Emmanuel, God with us; God in, with, and amongst men, and indeed the all of his word and religion, stand cloathed in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, yea, all over the New Testament; and particularly by prophecies and miracles, as well as by the spirit and power of God in and upon all real saints and sincere christians whatever.

Thus the evangelist, Luke, the beloved physician, (as the apostle Paul styles him, Col. iv. 14) who, in the name, and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, wrote this sacred history, most likely at Rome, where he was a companion of the great apostle Paul, in his sufferings and life, his doctrine and death; a witness, it would appear, of his glorious and triumphant death there, as a martyr, for the love and sake of Jesus, and the resurrection of Christ, and the gospel, (2 Tim. iv. 6, 8, 11) tells us, in the course of
this

this divine history, that after the apostles and disciples of Christ had received all necessary orders, instructions, and directions; yea, comforts and consolations for the time, from their divine Lord and Master; and had also, as all assembled in a body, as witnesses chosen of God on purpose, seen him ascend heaven, as a risen, an exalted, and triumphant Saviour; and so take possession of it, both for himself, as Mediator, and also for all his. Heb. ix. 24. John xiv. 1, 2, 3.

And likewise, after having chosen, according to the word of God, another apostle, viz. Matthias, as a successor to Judas the traitor, the only successor ever any apostle of Christ had, or was designed of God to have, as apostles. For the Bible, or mind and will of God, as revealed in the word of his grace, always was the religion, and all the religion both of prophets and apostles, and of the whole true church of God. And as it is so by divine appointment, by all the authority of God and of his Christ, all the authority of heaven; it is, and must be, the religion, and all the religion, of all real Saints and sincere Christians, to the end of time. Psa. xli. 9. lxix. 25, 26. cix. 8, 9. xix. 7, 11. Isa. viii. 20. Jer. xv. 16. John v. 39. Matt. xxii. 29. Mark xii. 24, 27. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Pet. i. 19, 21.

Yea, after having waited at Jerusalem, in obedience to, and dependence upon, the Son of God, by faith and prayer, and in the conscientious practice of the all of commanded duty, for the promise of the Father; and which promise of the Holy Ghost, he himself in person assured them of again and again, as the first chap. of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels fully shew; for obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the one Law-giver in his church, and the sole Lord of the consciences of all men, is at once the highest wisdom, and the best interest of any man living, of all mankind. Jas. iv. 12. Acts iii. 22, 23. Psa. cx. 1, 3. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Eph. i. 19, 23. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10.

Thus when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the fiftieth day of his glorious resurrection, the tenth after his ascension, and formal entrance upon his glory, as an exalted Prince

Prince and Saviour, was arrived, they were all with one accord in one place, says the evangelist Luke, Acts ii. 1. They were all assembled, the apostles and disciples of Christ with one consent, in one and the same place, it would appear, by faith and true christian prayer, as well as in the wise, holy, and adorable providence of Almighty God; and verses 2, 3, 4, Suddenly, says he, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance; insomuch, that they were instantly able, by the teaching and power of the good and Holy Spirit of God, who before, it would appear, knew only their own mother-tongue, to speak forth, in all languages under heaven, the wonderful works of God. At the same time, that they were all filled with faith, and with the Holy Ghost, in all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces; and so supernaturally enabled for work and warfare, yea, for every good word and work, for either doing or suffering in life or death, according to the will of God; as polished shafts, chosen instruments, living witnesses for God and his Christ, before all the world; doing all in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus.

And as in the grace of God, as in Christ, and in the holy and adorable providence of Almighty God, there were residing at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of most nations under heaven, now at the feast of Pentecost; men of piety and religion, men that feared God, and waited for the consolation of Israel, that expected the coming of the Messiah, as Daniel's weeks were expired, and the sceptre was now departed from Judah, and a great number also, it would appear, of proselytes from amongst the Gentiles of different nations, were now there, who all jointly attest this grand and notable miracle. That, however, all the men that spoke and praised God for Jesus Christ, and redemption by his blood, with all the wonders of his love and grace, were Galileans, yet each of them, of whatever different or distant nation

nation or language, heard them speak in their own tongue, these wonderful works of God.

And they were all astonished and confounded at it, and could not account for the matter, ver. 5, 12. Some, indeed, of this great multitude, this vast crowd, from ignorance and unbelief of the holy scriptures, and for want of religion altogether, mocked this great work of God. Ver. 13, Upon which the apostle Peter, standing up, with the other eleven apostles, all now full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, able to speak all languages, as they had occasion, with a loud voice, as the apostle of the circumcision addresses the Jews in general, as, no doubt, the other apostles also preached Christ to other parts of this vast multitude.

And he unanswerably demonstrates to them, and all the world, that all this was, and only could be, the work of God; the proper, pure, and peculiar work of God. And so that the Holy Ghost, in all these his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, was now evidently come down amongst them; and that, according to the promise of God the Father, and in consequence of the purchase of God the Son; for neither man nor angel was so much as capable of what they all now saw and heard in the least degree.

And, therefore, it was now evident, in a manner, as the light of the sun at noon, from the whole scene before them; from the infallible word, and all these mighty and wonderful works of God, that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen indeed, and become the author, the declared author, of eternal life and everlasting salvation to all them that obey him, by grace believe on and obey him; having by one offering forever perfected all them are sanctified.

And that he was already set down at the Father's right-hand, as an exalted Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins.

And so that he had now sent down the good and holy spirit of God, with all his miraculous powers, supernatural gifts and graces, as their saving Instructor, their Almighty Supporter, their Divine Comforter, and their unerring Leader and Guide, by and according to the word of God, through life and death; of which Jesus Christ, and his divine

vine mission and character, as the true Messiah, the Son of the living God, and Saviour of the world; with the all of the office and character of the Holy Ghost; they were witnesses, living witnesses, chosen of God on purpose: And which grand facts, and glorious truths of God, concerning Jesus Christ, and salvation only in, and by him, they were all ready to attest with their very life, and indeed their all, whether for time or eternity.

But of which Christ of God, ye obstinate, unbelieving Jews! have been the betrayers, the crucifiers, and murderers; for by wicked hands ye have crucified and slain the righteous, the just, the holy one of God; the chosen, the called, the sent, and sealed of God; approved of God among you, by doctrines, by miracles, by signs, and wonders; which ye all know, and cannot refuse.

And thus the highest act of God's love, in sending his Son into the world to be born, live, and die, that whosoever of mankind should believe on him might not perish, but have everlasting life, and also the very highest expression of Christ's love in washing all his people from their sins, even in his own blood, out of ignorance, unbelief, and hardness of heart, has been openly and avowedly despised, contemned, trampled upon, and trodden under foot of you; but God hath raised him up. Or he, being both God and man in one person, with infinite ease, arose from the dead, and is now set down at the right-hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and shall reign there, until all his enemies be made his footstool. And therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Ver. 14, 36.

Thus the apostle Peter fully shews them, and all mankind besides, that all these facts and events recorded of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, whether in the four gospels, or in this history of the Acts of the Apostles, answer to Old Testament prophecies and predictions, just as face does to face in water. And therefore all mankind, Jew or Gentile, that acknowledge a God, and profess to believe a Bible, ought, yea must believe, these things. Joel ii. 28, 32. Isa. xlv. 3. viii. 9. vi. 7. vii. 14. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxi. 22. Gen.

Gen. xlix. 10. Dan. ix. 24, 26. Psa. xvi. 8, 11. cx. 1, 3. cxxxii. 11, 18.

And the apostle Peter gives them to know, and indeed all men, that all this grace and spirit of God, and of his Christ, was conveyed to, and conferred upon them purely, and only in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ, as a once crucified, but now an exalted and risen Saviour, and in the way of the covenant of grace, that new, that everlasting, and well-ordered covenant. For, says he, the promise, viz. of the covenant of grace, which runs in these terms all over the book of God, I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; your God in Christ, in covenant; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord of hosts, is directed unto you as God's professing people, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Rom. ix. 4, 5. Prov. viii. 4. Isa. lv. 1, 7. Matt. xi. 28, 30.

The external call of the gospel is thus directed to all wherever it comes and is known; but the internal call of the grace and spirit of Christ, accompanying the external call of the word, is indispensably necessary, in order to make it effectual to salvation. Psa. cx. 3. Heb. iv. 1, 3. Eph. ii. 5, 8. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 1 Thess. ii. 12, 13. Phil. i. 29. Gal. v. 22, 23.

Thus the evangelist Luke tells us, that such as were convinced of sin, and so pricked in their hearts, said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And the Lord added unto the church daily, by the light, love, and life of Christ, by the power of his word, grace, and spirit, such as should be saved. Ver. 37, 41, All this likely took place on the day of Pentecost, or tenth day after Christ's ascension, or the fiftieth from the morning of his resurrection. Jer. xxxi. 31, 37. Ezek. xxxvi.

xxxvi. 25, 28. Psa. lxxxix. 1, 5, 19, 20, 26, 29. Heb. viii. 8, 14.

C H A P. II.

Upon the Man lame from the Womb, made perfectly whole in the Name of Jesus, by Peter and John; with the Success, Spirit, and Power of his Religion.—Chap. iii. & iv.

THUS, in the third chapter of this sacred history of the Acts of the Apostles, we find Peter and John, two eminent and famous apostles of Christ, going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, for the Jews had three hours of prayer every day, at nine in the morning, twelve at noon, and three in the afternoon. Psa. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10.

This hour of prayer was the last of these, as he begun his sermon on the day of Pentecost, on the first, a few days before, it would appear, at our nine in the morning. And lo, in the holy and adorable providence of Almighty God, a certain man, above forty years old, (Acts iv. 22) lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called beautiful, most likely the principal front gate for the Jews, to ask alms of them that went into the temple to worship. And so well known to very many, who seeing Peter and John going into the temple, asked an alms.

And Peter fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us; and he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have, give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. For the liberal heart will devise liberal things, and the good heart is both the man and the Christian, and the greatest thing under the sun. And he took him by the right-hand and lift him up, assayed to do so, for God, both in nature and grace, ordinarily works in the use of means, and teaches us to do so likewise, in dependence upon him. He was made in an instant perfectly

perfectly sound and whole ; and he leaping up upon his feet, stood upright, and walked straight, which he had never done before, and joyfully entered with Peter and John into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God all the way as he went. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and they knew him perfectly, and were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Here was a notable miracle performed by Peter and John, in the name and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, evident to all the people still most likely assembled at the feast of Pentecost, and so in vast crowds, which was an acting above, or contrary to all the fixed and stated laws of nature ; and which God, who fixed these laws only, can do in the least instance. For man or angel, good or bad, are altogether unequal to it. As revelation, reason, the nature of the thing, with the experience of mankind, fully shew.

For juggling tricks, or seeming miracles, we know of, as Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses in Egypt ; but a real one, done by man, or angel, or devil, the world cannot show : And therefore this grand miracle, done before so many witnesses, and so fully attested by them, is a divine attestation indeed to the divine mission and character of the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator and Saviour, as also to the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the all of his doctrine and religion. For, says the Son of God himself, the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me ; works that none other man ever did. John x. 25. xv. 24. 2 Tim. iii. 8. But upon this miracle of nature, wrought upon the body of this poor man, a still greater work of grace seems to have been wrought upon his soul : He was made a new man in Christ ; created anew in him even unto good works ; justified before God by the blood and righteousness, and sanctified by the word and Spirit of the Lord Jesus ; and so Christ's free man indeed. For he continued to follow Christ, and associated with his apostles and disciples. Acts iii. 11. iv. 14. John viii. 36. 1 Cor. vi. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. v. 17.

Which work of grace, it would appear, wrought upon this poor man, was another divine attestation to the truth of the all of Christianity. For he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself, says the beloved apostle of Christ. 1 John v. 10. Accordingly, upon this great miracle, we have a truly glorious, noble, and divine sermon, preached by the apostle Peter, in the name, by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, attended also with very great and remarkable success, insomuch, that it is said in the next chapter, (likely the same day) the number of the men who believed, heartily embraced Christ and Christianity, was already about five thousand. Acts iv. 4. For when the lame man that was healed held Peter and John, cleaved to them, was loath, yea, perhaps, afraid to part with them, all the people ran together unto them, in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering at what was done unto him; whom they could not but know perfectly, as they had seen him so often. The apostle Peter proceeds to preach unto them all, Jesus, and the resurrection; Jesus, and eternal life and everlasting salvation only in and by him for any sinner of mankind. He shews them, that they were not so much as to imagine that he and John had done this by any power, or in consequence of any holiness of their own; for that was impossible to them, or any of mankind; but it was the name, the spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, that had made him whole; their faith in Christ, and in his power and providence, implanted in their hearts and souls by his word and spirit, was only the mean of applying the strength, the power, and spirit, or providence of Christ, to him, either as to body or soul; and they were no more than the bare or naked instruments in the hands of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost. Of which Christ of God ye have been the betrayers and murderers; but God raised him up, and hath set him at his own right-hand, as an exalted Prince and Saviour.

And now, brethren, says he, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. For God's prophets

prophets of old testified beforehand, both the sufferings of Christ, and his glory that should follow.

Repent ye, therefore, and be converted; seek, in good earnest, repentance towards God, faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, for Christ's sake, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

For Jesus, and eternal life; Jesus, and the resurrection, hath been preached and published by all the prophets of God since the world began; that is, from the introduction of sin into the world, and the very first intimation of a Saviour. Gen. iii. 15. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you: And it shall come to pass, that every soul that will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people, God's people.

Yea, all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken in the name of the Lord Jehovah, have foretold these days of Christ and the gospel.

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Gen. xii. 3. Rom. ix. 4, 5.

Unto you, first, God having raised up his Son, Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. It is the express command of God, and of his Christ, for us to begin at Jerusalem, to preach and publish this great Saviour, and his great salvation; and Jesus then to all the land of Judea; yea, to the uttermost parts of the earth. Gen. iii. 15. xii. 3. xlix. 10. Psal. ii. 1, 3, 6. lxxxix. 1, 5, 19, 20, 26, 29. cx. 1, 4. cxviii. 22, 26. Isa. ix. 6, 7. liii. 1, 12. vii. 14. Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20.

Thus, in the beginning of the fourth chapter, we find, as they were preaching Jesus, and eternal life only in and by him, (notwithstanding the hearts of about two thousand men were opened by the word, power, and spirit of the Lord

Lord Jesus, to attend, in a saving manner, to the things of God and his Christ) they were apprehended by the obstinate and unbelieving Jewish rulers, and imprisoned all night, both Peter and John, as if they had been evil doers; and the next day sifted before their great Sanhedrim, it would appear, the very crucifiers of the Prince of life, the Lord of glory: And they asked them, by what power, or by what name ye have done this great and notable miracle? For it is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we ourselves, the very crucifiers of Jesus of Nazareth, and your greatest enemies, cannot deny it.

Upon which, Peter, with John, both full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, answered to them all assembled in council, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of you, as to the good deed, the humane, christian, and god-like deed done to the poor, lame, impotent man yesterday, who is just now here before you all, cleaving to Christ with full purpose of heart, and associating with us his apostles and followers; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel; all the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your boasted fathers, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, but whom God hath raised from the dead, and fully declared to be the Son of God with power, both by his glorious resurrection, and the plain, the full, and open down-pouring of his good and Holy Spirit, in such a manner and measure as had never been done before, nor was it to be expected after: Although every man in Christ, ever since the very first intimation of a Saviour, (Gen. iii. 15) always had the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9. All of which either is, or may be, manifest to you all; even by him, this Christ of God, doth this man stand here before you whole.

And what you have done already as to Jesus of Nazareth, is just what your father David long since told you, by the Spirit of God, you would do. Plal. ii. 1, 6. xxii. 7, 18. cxviii. 22, 26.

This once crucified, but now exalted and risen Saviour, is at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation, the sure foundation of all the hopes and happiness

happinefs of all faints, God hath laid in Zion; which can never poffibly fail or give way in the leaft, as the whole Gospel declares. And neither is there falvation in any other, nor can be, for any finner of mankind; for there is none other name under heaven given by God among men, but Jefus Chrift the Lord, whereby we, or indeed any finner of all mankind, can be faved. Acts iv. 1, 12. Ifa. xxviii. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. Eph. ii. 20, 22. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Rom. ix. 33. x. 4, 9, 11.

Upon which all the Jewifh rulers affembled in council could not, nor did not, yea durft not, for fear of man, in the over-ruling providence of God, contradict the leaft tittle of their noble defence of Chrift and Chriftianity: For all men glorified God for that which was done to the impotent man, who was above forty years old, whom they had fo long feen and perfectly known. And not a foul of them prefumes either to contradict it, or to vindicate the lie they put with a large fum of money into the mouths of the Roman foldiers that guarded the fepulchre. His difciples came by night, and ftole him away while we fleeped. Matt. xxiv. 13.

But in a body, they charged them and commanded them, even with threatenings, not fo much as to fpeak, teach, or preach any more to any man in the name of Jefus. But the apoftles Peter and John, in the name, and by the fpirit and power of the Lord Jefus, for they were all obliged, by their wisdom, fpirit, and manner, to take notice of them that they had been with Jefus, boldly answered, Whether it be right in the fight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye?

Yea, that we ought to obey God rather than man, you and all the world muft allow. And, therefore, in obedience to God and his Chrift, we cannot but fpeak and publifh to you, and to the world, in the name of Jefus, the things which we have both feen and heard, and are indeed fent of God, as chofen witneffes, to attelt.

Upon which they ftill further threaten them, and were obliged, for fear of men, to let them go. Thus the Holy Jefus, who rules by law and love, by his word, grace, and fpirit, in all believing fouls; rules with the fame infinite eafe ever,

ever, over, and amidst all his and his people's enemies. Acts iv. 13, 22. Psa. cx. 1, 3.

Upon which the humble, the Holy Jesus, and joyful apostles of Christ, as soon as they can repair to their own company, their fellow-apostles and disciples, and faithfully report to them all that the chief priests and elders had said or done unto them, and likely amongst other things, that their dear Lord and Master, according to his promise, before his death, (Luke xxi. 15) had now clearly given them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries, or most inveterate enemies put together, were not able to gainsay or resist; upon which, with one accord, as being all of one heart and one soul in the Lord, they lift up their hearts, with their voice, to God in the heavens; and as one man, one soul, bless God as the Almighty Creator, the sole Proprietor, and the supreme Ruler and Governor of the universe; and above all things for his unspeakable gift, the Lord Jesus Christ, the foundation of all their hopes and and happiness for time and eternity, and for the infallible truth and glorious certainty of his word, as spoken by David, Psa. ii. 1, 6. And they, in the same name, by the same spirit and power as David, set their joint seal to it, saying, Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done; in which God had an infinitely wise, gracious, holy, and all-powerful hand, but all these a very sinful and wicked one. Thus they address the Father in the Son, by the spirit, according to the word of God, saying, And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that, with all boldness, they may speak thy word, by stretching forth their hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Their prayer was no sooner made than answered. And the

the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul; such was the power of the love, the life, the grace, and the spirit of Christ, accompanying his word and ordinances, that they were all one in interest, spirit, and affection with the Son of God, and one with one another in the Lord, as all Saints indeed always are in some measure, 1 Cor. vi. 17. John xvii. 21. Yea, they so much breathed the same spirit of Christ, and were actuated by the same principles and sentiments, and pursued the same line of conduct, and maintained the same godly conversation in the world, that, in a manner before God and men, one and the same heart, one and the same soul, animated them all, as if they had been one body, as well as spirit. And as a demonstration of this very thing to all the world, not a single soul of them said, That ought of the things which he possessed of this world, or the common blessings, or good things of this life, was his own.

Notwithstanding whatever he thus possessed in the goodness of God, by the bounty of heaven, by every law of Christ and of Christianity, was still his own sole right and property; yet he was by the grace of God and the spirit of Christ, just as willing and ready to serve his christian brethren, that really needed, with whatever he thus had, as himself; so that, in a manner, they had all these things common. For as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles feet; and distribution was made to every man according as he had need; and with great power, by word and doctrine, by miracles, signs, and wonders, by life and practice, gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all—all true believers on the Son of God, all real Saints and sincere Christians, Acts iv. 23, 37. All of which is demonstration itself, to the divine mission and character, the resurrection and glory of Christ, with the truth of the all of his religion to all the world. Infomuch, that all the wisdom of this world cannot contradict, nor in the least degree overthrow this divine light and evidence for Christ and Christianity; nor assign the least shadow of a reason,

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how any thing in all the universe of God, but the love and life, the word, grace, power, and spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, of a once crucified, but now an exalted Lord and Saviour, should produce such divine fruits and glorious effects in and upon any of mankind sinners. Psa. cxviii. 22, 23, 24. Matt. xii. 33. Luke vi. 44. John x. 25. xv. 24.

C H A P. III.

The awful Judgment of God upon Ananias and Sapphira for a Lie ; with the Spirit and Power of Christ upon his Apostles.—Acts v.

THUS, in the 5th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the religion of Jesus, which is all over a religion of love, peace, and truth, is further gloriously demonstrated in this manner, as by an awful judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira for a lie ; who sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, and brought the remainder and laid it down (as the full price of the whole) at the apostles feet ; upon which the apostle Peter, by the unerring spirit of God, asks him, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie, to lie to the Holy Ghost, as if it was possible to deceive God, and to keep back part of the price of the land, and say a part was the whole ; while it remained unfold, was it not thine own, and even after the price was solely in thine own power, to give, or not give, as thou chose before God ?

Why hast thou, under the influence of Satan, conceived this thing in thine heart, as if thou and thy wife, with the devil in your hearts, could deceive the eternal spirit of the eternal God ? Thou hast not lied unto men only, but let all men know, by what follows thou hast lied unto God the Holy Ghost, who is now evidently in, with, and amongst us. Upon which Ananias instantly falls down and dies ; and about three hours after, his wife, being guilty of the same sin, shares the same fate. They both die temporally in a moment, whether eternally or not, God only knows ; which should

should teach all the world what a sinful and awful thing lying is.

The effect of this awful judgment of God, for their wicked lie, was, that both the church and world, Saints and sinners, were afraid of the apostles, as having such power with God, as the people of Israel of old often were of their prophets. 1 Sam. xvi. 4.

And of the rest, even of Christians, durst no man join himself to the apostles. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And the people in general magnified them; and multitudes, both of men and women, true believers, sincere Christians, were more and more added unto the Lord. And many signs and wonders, real miracles of healing, both in the city of Jerusalem, and of persons brought on purpose from the country about, were wrought; insomuch, that it would appear evident, the very shadow of Peter overshadowing them was sufficient, yea, all that came for cure were healed in the name, by the spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, which unanswerably demonstrates to all the world, the divine truth and certainty of the all of the religion of the Son of God, Acts v. 1, 16. Upon which the Jewish High Priest, and all they that were with him, of the sect of the Sadducees, who by their own confession, as Sadducees, can neither believe a God, nor that there is either an angel or devil, or a world to come, Acts xxiii. 7, 8. Matt. xxiii. 23. xvi. 6, 12, were filled with malice, envy, and indignation, against the apostles, from real enmity against God. And laid violent hands upon them, most likely altogether, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, as the special objects both of God's grace and providence. And said unto them, Go stand, and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life, of eternal life, and everlasting salvation by Jesus Christ, and by him alone. And when they heard that they entered into the temple early in the morning and taught, which was divine attestation from heaven, that they were the true servants of God in the gospel of his Son, and that it was the truth as in Jesus, and that alone which they published.

But while the apostles of Christ were thus preaching Jesus and the resurrection, Jesus and eternal life, to the people, the high-priest assembled, it would appear, the whole sanhedrim, designing some severe measures with them. But the officers whom they sent to bring them to them, returning, told them, the prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened them, we found no man within. They all seemed to be entirely ignorant that God by his angel had delivered his own servants. But while they are in suspense and doubt, one comes and tells them, the men ye put in prison were standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

Then the captain of the temple, with the officers, went and brought them, without violence, (for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned) and set them before the council: And the high-priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered and said, as one man, We ought to obey God, rather than man in opposition to him, as you and all the world must allow. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right-hand, as a Prince, a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, with all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, which God hath given to them that obey him. Upon which they took counsel together to slay them.

But in the holy and adorable providence of Almighty God they were all overswayed by the advice of Gamaliel, a learned doctor in Israel, had in great reputation among the people, (at whose feet the apostle Paul was educated in all the wisdom and learning of the Jews) Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought, as he instances by two
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former cases; but if it be of God, as indeed it was, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God, as they were, which soon turned to their own destruction, both as a church and nation; and to him they agreed. And when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded them that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Acts iv. 17, 42. Eccl. iii. 14. Isa. xlix. 10. Which teaches us, that there is neither wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. And so whenever God sees meet to arise and work, none can let or hinder, no person, nothing whatever.

And thus, such was the heavenly and divine doctrine, the pious, holy, and exemplary life of the apostles of Christ, and first christians; such the spirit and power of God that backed their ministry; so many and so great were their miracles, all wrought in the name and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus; and so evidently were the truths of God they taught confirmed by so many and such clear Old Testament prophecies and predictions concerning Jesus Christ and the Gospel, with the office and agency of the Holy Ghost, that the most obstinate and unbelieving Jews assembled in their public council, or their sanhedrim of seventy elders at least, could not contradict any thing said or done by the apostles; yea, by their so readily agreeing with Gamaliel's advice, they publicly acknowledged, before the world, their own wickedness, in hiring the Roman guard, with a large sum of money, to make a lie; for it was possible, for any thing they knew, Jesus of Nazareth might be risen indeed. Matt. xxviii. 11, 15. Luke xxiv. 34.

In the above glorious and divine manner, the divine mission and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the truth of the all of Christianity, stands unanswerably demonstrated in the first five chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, during

during the first year, it would appear, after his resurrection.

C H A P. IV.

Upon the Character and Miracles, the Death and Martyrdom of Stephen, the first Christian Martyr.—Chaps. vi. vii.

THUS we find, in the sixth and seventh chapters, after the primitive church, or first christians, by the advice of the apostles, had chosen seven deacons to take care of the poor, whom they ordained to that office, (which shews us and all the world that it belongs to the true church of Christ, to chuse her own ministers or officers, by divine right) Stephen, one of them, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, bears witness to Christ and the all of Christianity, not only by his doctrine, life, and miracles, but also by his glorious and triumphant death. For when certain obstinate, unbelieving Jews, of the synagogue of the libertines, which consisted of Jews of the dispersion, Jews from different nations, who were free men of Rome, either by birth, or manumission; that is, they were either free born, or made free, and it is likely Saul of Tarsus was one of them, they all together disputing with Stephen about Moses and the law, were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake; and so suborned men, as false witnesses, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God; against this holy place, and against the law. And so he is brought before the council as a blasphemer of God, and an injurer of men; and condemned to be stoned to death as such, according to the law of Moses. Levit. xxiv. 16. Acts vi. 9, 15.

And as he was thus falsely accused, and unjustly condemned by the Jewish sanhedrim, or the supreme court of the nation; such was the grace, power, and spirit of the Lord Jesus upholding him, that all that sat in the council, as his judges, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Acts vi. 11, 15. Thus, when

when sifted before them as a blasphemer, the high-priest asks him, Are these things so?

Upon which, in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, he at once sets before them his faith in Christ as a believing Jew, as well as now a sincere christian; and indeed the faith of all real saints, ever since God's Son was revealed as a Saviour. Gen. iii. 15.

He shows them that it was in consequence of the great Old Testament promise, viz. of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as a Saviour, the true Messiah, the true Shiloh, Emmanuel, God with us; God in our nature; God in, with, and amongst men, that Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, was called; and that this great promise was renewed to Abraham, to Isaac, and also Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; namely, "That in their seed all the families of the earth should be blessed." Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3. Which promise, made known to all the believing fathers, was confirmed to the tribes of Judah, and then the family of David. Gen. xlix. 10. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Isa. lv. 3.

And the promise of Canaan to Abraham and his seed was only a temporal promise, as such in the way of the covenant of grace, and an undoubted earnest and pledge to all the world of the accomplishment of the great promise of a Saviour in due time, as all the spiritual blessings and privileges they enjoyed in that land also were. Thus he gives them to know, that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David, yea, all the believing fathers from Moses to Christ, lived by faith on the Son of God, and walked in the love and fear of God; and saw, by faith and spiritual discernment, beforehand, both the sufferings of Christ, and his glory that should follow; so that it was the same Jesus that they had crucified, but whom God had glorified, that not only Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph believed and lived upon by faith, but that appeared to Moses, as the angel of the Lord, in the bush burning, but not consumed, in the wilderness of Sinai.

A glaring figure of the church of God then in Egypt, and indeed often in a suffering state; and especially of his own human

human nature, supported by his divine nature, under all his sufferings and death, and so in the issue not hurt by them; as the God of their Fathers, and called Moses to be the leader of his people of Israel out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea, as on dry land. Who gave the law from Mount Sinai, which, in all its glory, was only a shadow of good things to come, but the body was of Christ, who went in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, all the way from Egypt to the Holy Land, upon the head of our fathers; who were led, fed, and cloathed by miracle for the space of forty years, and then by the same Son of God put in possession of Canaan, in the same glorious and divine manner. Of which Christ of God, Moses testified to them all, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people, God's people. Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. Acts iii. 22, 23.

And thus Stephen tells the whole Jewish Sanhedrim, assembled in council, sitting upon him as judges, the truth before God; for no man of his spirit and principles, or that has the spirit of Christ, will dissemble God's truth at any rate. Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them, these holy men of God, which shewed before of the coming of Christ, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. Although ye have received your whole law from his gracious lips on Mount Sinai, attended with his holy angels, and cloathed with all the emblems of his divine presence and glory there, and have not kept it.

And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth, as men transported with infernal rage. For blind zeal, superstition, and bigotry, are always cruel and outrageous. But he, as an eminent Saint of God, for the least Saint of God is the re-

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verse, the full reverse of all the world besides; being full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly unto heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God. And he tells them with humble but holy and exalted triumph in Christ, over all their false accusations and wicked judgment, over death and the grave, over hell and all the powers of darkness, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man, our once suffering but now enthroned Redeemer, standing on the right-hand of God, as with out-stretched arms, ready to receive me. Upon which they stopped their ears, cast him out of the city, and stoned him with stones. And the false witnesses, who, by the law of Moses, it behoved to cast the first stone, laid down their cloaths at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul, viz. of Tarsus, who, no doubt, was one of the busy disputants with Stephen, and now a witness of his glorious and triumphant death. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God by faith and prayer, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and also praying for those very persons that were embruining their hands in his blood, kneeling down and saying, in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And so he dies before God the Father, in the hands of his dear Son, as all Saints, indeed, both live and die. And so leads the van of the noble army of all christian martyrs, and is greater in death, by Christ in him, than he was in life, and is crowned with glory. John xiv. 6. vi. 37. 1 John iii. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8. Rev. xiv. 13. vii. 9, 11, 17.

Thus Stephen, by his life and doctrine, by Old Testament prophecies and predictions, and great wonders and miracles, wrought in the name of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, and especially by his glorious and triumphant death, for the love and sake of Jesus, and the resurrection, all over these chapters, fully attests the divine mission and character of Jesus Christ, as a Saviour, and the infallible truth of the all of Christianity.

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CHAP.

C H A P. V.

Persecution, the Means of publishing and spreading the Gospel to Samaria, and even Africa.—Chap. viii.

THE eighth chapter of the Acts also abundantly confirms the true faith of Christ, as a very violent persecution of the disciples and followers of Christ, upon the death of Stephen, which dispersed all the preachers of Christ, except the apostles, it would appear, who were as yet protected in Jerusalem, by the power and providence of their God and Saviour, however many others might suffer besides Stephen, as our blessed Lord told his disciples before his death, they should. Matt. xxiii. 34, 36. Acts viii. 1, 4, 22. iv. 7, 26. ix. 11. Thus, I say, this violent persecution was in the wise, holy, and adorable providence of Almighty God, contrary to the intention of all their enemies, the very mean of spreading and publishing the gospel of the grace of God to other people and nations, which shews, in divine lines, and living accents also, the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God. Thus Philip, the deacon, being now an evangelist, went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them, and wrought many miracles amongst them. And such was the power of the word, grace, and spirit of Christ there, that many believed, and were baptized; yea, even Simon Magus, the forcerer, was so far convinced, as to desire baptism. Upon which Peter and John were sent by the other apostles, both to preach Christ to, pray for, and confer the Holy Ghost upon them; which was all accordingly done. And when Simon, who had long dealt in juggling tricks and feigned miracles, and deceived the simple like the Egyptian forcerers of old contending with Moses, or other feigned miracle-workers since, saw that, through the laying on of the apostles hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

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But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee; thy heart is not right with God, thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; thou art still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; upon which Simon earnestly intreats Peter to pray for him, that none of these things which he had mentioned might come upon him. And so, although a very wicked man, and under the power of sin and Satan, he bears witness for fear of punishment, to the truth of God's word.

Upon which the angel of the Lord sends Philip to preach Christ and his gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, in the desert of Judea, returning to his own country, reading the prophet Isaiah; which contains different events and circumstances, that none but God could foresee or foretel. For none but God, who sees all things at once, could trust two persons to meet so punctually in a desolate wilderness; with the other important circumstances of the affair. For Philip, from the words of Isaiah, liii. 7, 8, which he was reading, but understood not, preached to him Jesus, and his perfect righteousness, and satisfaction, his full atonement for the sins of all his people; all such of mankind as ever did, or should in good earnest, come to God the Father, in, and by him; Jesus and the resurrection, Jesus and eternal life to him and all such as should, by grace, believe on and obey him.

And immediately precious and divine faith in Christ, to the saving of his soul, is implanted in his heart, by the Holy Ghost, or by the word and spirit of the Lord. And he receives a whole Christ, in his whole character, as a Saviour; with his whole heart, and as the unspeakable gift of God; also rests and relies upon him alone for salvation; is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, not only with water, but also with the Holy Ghost, and goes on his way rejoicing, rejoicing not only to profess, but also live in Christ; rejoicing to hold and have his all of him, whether for time or eternity; and particularly rejoicing to publish and proclaim salvation by him to the Ethiopians, south of Egypt, and, if possible, to all the sons of Ham in Africa, or even of Adam, over the world, Acts viii. chapter at large, Prov. iii. 5, 6. viii. 4. John vi. 29. Isa. lv. 1, 7, which is all divine light and evidence,

dence, yea, demonstration itself to all the world, in behalf of Christ, and the all of genuine Christianity.

C H A P. VI.

The Conversion and Character of the Apostle Paul, with other Miracles of Power and Grace ; grand Evidence for Christ and Christianity.—Chap. ix.

IN the ninth chapter of this sacred history, we have the power of the word, grace, and spirit of Christ, with the infallible truth of the all of the religion Jesus illustrated in a very glorious and divine manner.

In the beginning of the second year after the resurrection of Christ or so, we have the conversion of one of the greatest of mere men, if not the greatest, perhaps, that ever lived, the apostle Paul. His Hebrew name was Saul, (desired); his Roman name, Paul, (little.) The ancients say he was three cubits, or four feet and an half high. As even before his conversion to Christ and Christianity, he seems to have been famous among the Jews every where, as a mighty stickler for Moses and the law, in opposition to Christ and the gospel, out of blind zeal, pure ignorance, and real unbelief, not knowing that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world; and so the very sum and substance, the life and glory of the whole Mosaical dispensation; and was designed by them as Saul of Tarsus, the chief city of Celicia, a country in the lesser Asia, a little Athens, for Grecian learning; where he was first instructed in all the learning of the Greeks, and then sent to Jerusalem to be further and fully instructed under Gamaliel, a learned doctor in Israel, and famous there in all the wisdom and learning of the Jews, and particularly in the knowledge of their law, or the holy scriptures: For this was all the profession of their rabbins or doctors, and these at once contained all the essential and valuable materials of knowledge for all the world besides, however other nations, out of ignorance, pride, and folly, and

and in contempt of the Jews, disguised whatever their greatest men and philosophers learned from them.—Thus the evangelist Luke, after having already three different times mentioned Saul as a violent persecutor, and also hinted at him as a keen disputant with Stephen it is likely, in the beginning of this chapter, tells us, that Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter, as it were nothing but death, and the severest punishments against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus, a principal city of Syria; letters of commission and authority from him, and the whole sanhedrim, to the synagogues, whether of Jews or proselytes there, that if he found any disciples or followers of Christ there, whether men or women, he might bring them in chains to Jerusalem to be put to death.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus with all his bloody attendants, well prepared, no doubt, for their horrid purpose. And behold, when they thought their prey was just in a manner already in their hand, and could not be taken from the mighty, suddenly, or as it were, all at once, there shined round about them a light from heaven, a great light, a supernatural body of light, a light which vastly outshone the sun in the heavens in all his meridian splendor, and smote him with total blindness. For says he himself, “I could not see for the glory of that light.”

And when he and all his attendants were fallen flat on the ground, as dead, for fear, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to him from heaven, saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” And he said, “Who art thou, Lord?” And the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,” or any man to oppose Almighty God. And he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what will thou have me to do?” He was already made willing, by the grace, power, and spirit of the Lord Jesus, who thus appeared to him as a once crucified, but now an exalted and risen Saviour, cloathed with all the glory of heaven, either to do or suffer, in life or death, according to his will. And the Lord said unto him, the Lord of heaven and earth, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be

he told thee what thou must do." And the men which journeyed with him, his armed force, to bind and bring Christians to Jerusalem to be put to death, when they had gathered themselves up, stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

And Saul arose from the earth by the power and providence of God; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man. These infidel heroes, like all others of the same stamp, were soon subdued by the Son of God. And Saul being already created anew in Christ Jesus the Lord even unto good works; and at his prayer to God, for Christ's sake (as an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ) earnestly desires his companions to lead him, blind as he was, to Damascus; and they were glad to lead him by the hand all the way; where he remained three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink; but was an earnest, humble, and devout supplicant at a throne of grace, no doubt, all the time. Acts ix. 11.

And there was at Damascus a certain disciple of Jesus, a true learner and follower of Christ, named Ananias; and the Lord Jesus Christ said unto him in a vision, "Ananias, arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision, a vision from heaven, a man, named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight." Then Ananias answered with all humility, but with holy joy, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, and hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name." But the Lord Jesus, who is love itself, grace and truth itself, said unto him, "Go thy way without delay; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, a chosen instrument, to bear my name, my religion, the all of my religion, before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name and glory's sake." And immediately he obeyed and went, and put his hands on him, in the name, and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, and said, "Brother Saul, the
Lord,

Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me on purpose that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." And accordingly he instantly received his sight, and looked up; and was at the same time filled with faith, and with the Holy Ghost, in all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, both in an extraordinary manner and measure: And arose, and was baptised; took meat after his long fast, and was strengthened in body as well as in mind; and directly associated himself with the disciples, the lovers and followers of a crucified Jesus, at Damascus, and soon preached Christ openly in their synagogues, and unanswerably demonstrated to them all, that he is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; the Christ, the Son of the living God; the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation; the true God, and eternal life.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, with infinite ease, plucked Saul of Tarsus as a brand out of the burning; he that had made him a man, soon made him a sincere christian, a saint of the first magnitude, and, it would appear, the greatest of his apostles; even greater by this one personal appearance to him from heaven, than any or all of those that had attended him in his whole personal ministry upon earth. And he sends him forth as an apostle of his, in his name, by his spirit and power, and with all his authority, to preach his word, to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, Jesus and the resurrection, Jesus and eternal life, and everlasting salvation only in and by him for any sinner of mankind; Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, by grace believeth, Jew or Gentile, all over the world.

And so as a minister or humble servant of Jesus Christ, and as a witness, a living witness for God and his Christ in the world, to declare the whole counsel of God; which is at once the true glory and character of every true gospel minister, and the most that ever any man upon the face of God's earth was in the church of God by divine appointment.

Thus the divinely amiable and altogether lovely Jesus, the image and glory of the Father, God in the likeness of men,

men, the very and eternal Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, the great and the living Representative both of God and his will to the world, sends forth this great apostle, in a manner, as a little sun in and under himself, as the all-glorious sun of righteousness, to enlighten and enliven all the dark places of the earth, Jew or Gentile, all over the world; and especially as the apostle of the Gentiles to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them; all them which are sanctified by the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Acts ix. 1, 20, 22. i. 15, 26. i. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 7. John xv. 16. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20.

Upon which this great apostle, as he increased in bodily strength by the power and providence of God, so he grew in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; increased in faith, power, and spirit, by the Holy Ghost, and so in the name, by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, soon confounded all the Jews at Damascus, by arguments from the Holy Scriptures; and unanswerably proved upon them, that Jesus was in very deed the Christ of God, and the one and only Saviour of sinners; for which reason, they sought by all means they could to kill him; but the disciples of Christ at Damascus let him down by the wall by night in a basket, and he escaped their fury, and fled to Jerusalem for safety, where the disciples were afraid of him, until they understood that he was indeed a real convert to Christ and Christianity. And so rejoiced to associate with him, until they found Jerusalem too hot for him; and so they were glad to conduct him to Cæsarea, on his way to Tarsus, his native place; upon which, in the grace of God, as in Christ, and in the holy and adorable providence of almighty God, the churches of Christ had rest and peace all over Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and built up in the faith of Christ, and walked in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; and so were multiplied daily more and more, Acts ix. 21, 31, which is all divine light and evidence in every line, and all the wisdom of this world cannot contradict it in the least instance.

For who but Jesus Christ, and God as in him, in all the universe of God, (let all the world say if they can) could have done such a thing as this; or made of a most violent persecutor of saints the very first of christians, and the most eminent, if not the very first of all saints and apostles whatever? As the all of his life and doctrine, his faith and practice, his miracles and conversation in the world, and especially his sufferings and death, shew to all mankind.

For the passive hero, all the world must allow, is greater than the active; and what but Christ and Christianity, in all the universe of God, can lay a foundation for such true and exalted heroism as he shewed by Christ in him, both in life and death? Acts xxi. 13. xxiv. 14, 16. 1 Cor. xv. 10. 2 Cor. xi. 5, 22, 33. Rom. viii. 35, 37. 1 Tim. xii. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8.

But besides the conversion and character of the apostle Paul, this ninth of the Acts of the Apostles contains other three grand and conclusive arguments, in behalf of Christ and Christianity, to all the world. The miraculous cure of Eneas, a man sick of the palsy, and confined to his bed by it eight years. And the apostle Paul only says to him, "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed." And he arose, at once perfectly whole. Another notable miracle, wrought in the name of Christ by Peter, was his raising Tabitha, or Dorcas, to life, at Joppa, when dead: A religious, good woman, full of alms deeds and good works, which she did in faith and love to Christ. Another greater work than both these, recorded also in this chapter, was a work of grace, by the word and spirit of the Lord, wrought upon great numbers of people at Lydda and Saron, with its fruitful valley, and at Joppa, a sea-port, who by grace believed the gospel preached by Peter, and turned to the Lord. Acts ix. 32, 43.

C H A P. VII.

*New and glorious Evidence for Christ and Christianity by two
Visions from Heaven, and the miraculous Power of the
Grace and Spirit of Christ upon Gentiles as
well as Jews, Cornelius and others.*
—Chap. x.

IN the tenth chapter we have the character and office of Jesus Christ, and the truth and certainty of Christianity, illustrated in a new and very glorious manner: That grand, that glorious, that divine and god-like dispensation of God's grace as in Christ, equally directed to the Gentiles as to the Jews, opened up by means of two visions immediately from heaven, and, by the preaching of Peter, powerfully backed with the Holy Ghost, in all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces upon the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Thus Cornelius, a Roman, a centurion or colonel of the Italian band, (so called, because it consisted of native Romans, stationed at Cæsarea, a strong fort upon the sea-coast, rebuilt and fortified by Herod the Great, and called Cæsarea in honour of Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, his great friend and patron) a devout man, that feared God, and believed in Jesus Christ, it would appear, as the true Messiah; was religious before God with all his house, gave much alms to the poor, and prayed to God continually. Whether he was a proselyte of the gate, or of righteousness or not; at the hour of prayer with the Jews, the last of the three hours of prayer with them, at their ninth hour of the day, but our three in the afternoon, he, although a soldier, a Roman officer of rank and distinction, was praying in his house: He believed in the one only living and true God, and, no doubt, expected either the Messiah was already come, or would come. And lo, as he fasted and prayed, an angel of God, in the likeness of a man, but much more glorious, appears to him, saying, "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before

fore God. And Cornelius was afraid of the angel, and said, What is it, Lord; or, what meaneth this?" The angel of God answered, "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." And accordingly he sent two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, upon this grand errand, after he had told them the vision, and what the angel of God commanded him.

Thus Cornelius and his house were soon prepared on the one hand, by the Son of God, for that amazing work and scene of grace that was just about to open upon them; and Peter is also readily prepared by the amiable and divine, the altogether lovely Jesus on the other.

Next day, about the sixth hour with the Jews, at our noon, or twelve of the clock, another hour of prayer with them, Peter, going up to the house-top to pray, became very hungry, and would have eaten: But while they made ready for him, he fell into a trance; and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending to him, in likeness of a great sheet, or cloth, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, such as the Jewish law most likely forbid them to eat. And there came a voice to him from heaven, saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten any thing common or unclean, according to the law of Moses." And the same voice of the holy Jesus spake to him again the second time, "What God, the great sovereign and sole Proprietor of heaven and earth, hath cleansed, that call not thou common, nor no man." This was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven. While Peter doubted in himself what this vision from heaven should mean, the providence of God soon opened up the matter to him.

Cornelius's faithful servants were at the door asking for him, and the unerring Spirit of God expressly commands him to go with him, assuring him, it was an act of obedience to his divine Lord and Master. And so when he

understood their business fully, he called them in, and lodged them that night. And the next day, went cheerfully with them, accompanied with certain christian brethren from Joppa.

And when they arrived at Cæsarea, Cornelius, having gathered together his kinsmen and near friends, awaited him, and was ready to pay a sort of divine homage to him, which Peter altogether disclaimed, and went with him directly into his house, where many were assembled: And gives him to know, God had taught him, by a vision from heaven, to call no man common or unclean; and so asks him for what intent he had sent for him. Cornelius explains the matter fully to him, and tells him, four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold a man stood before me in bright cloathing, and said, "Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send, therefore, to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee." Immediately, therefore, I sent to thee, and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now, therefore, we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons for any earthly or worldly considerations, or even any thing purely personal or national; but in every nation under heaven, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

He, and he only, that by grace believes on, loves, and obeys the Son of God; God as in Christ, and the gospel of his grace; being justified by the blood and righteousness, and sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and so has a holy and a filial fear of God in his heart and before his eyes, and works righteousness, or abounds in the all of true gospel holiness, or real christian obedience, in the name, by the word, the spirit, and power of Christ; is always graciously accepted of God the Father for his Son's sake. John i. 12, 13, 14. vi. 6, 37. Eph. i. 6.

6. Thus imputed righteousness, and implanted grace, with all of true gospel holiness, always go together. 1 Cor. i. 30. Rom. viii. 29, 30. 1 Thess. iv. 3.

Upon which he proceeds to preach to them all, Jesus and the resurrection, Jesus and eternal life, and everlasting salvation and happiness only in and by him, for any sinner of mankind; and that by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, or any other law whatever. We are witnesses chosen of God, we the apostles and disciples of Christ; and so is also the Holy Ghost, with all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces, of these things, of God, and of his Christ; of which great Saviour, and his great salvation, Old Testament prophets also fully testified beforehand. Upon which the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word of God, Gentiles as well as Jews; so that they were first baptized with the Holy Ghost by God himself, even with his miraculous powers, supernatural gifts, and saving graces; and then with water by Peter, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jehovah; even the Romans; as well as Jews; insomuch, that the six Jewish believers that came with Peter from Joppa, all of them were astonished when they heard Cornelius and his friends speak with tongues, and magnify God. Acts x. at large. xiii. 38, 39. Jer. xxxi. 34. Micah vii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12. Eph. iii. 4, 12. Isa. liii. 5, 6. Dan. ix. 24. Zech. xii. 10, which is all divine light and evidence for Christ, and the all of Christianity also.

C H A P. VIII.

The Dispensation of God's Grace as in Christ, directed to Gentiles as well as Jews; approved of by the Apostles, and confirmed by many Facts.—Chap. xi.

IN the eleventh chapter, we have the dispensation of God's grace as in Christ, directed to Gentiles as well as Jews, explained by Peter to the church at Jerusalem, approved of by the

the apostles and church of God there, with the glorious spread and success of the gospel in different parts, as Antioch, the metropolis, or chief city in all Syria, where the disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Phœnicia, famous of old for Tyre and Sidon, and Cyrene in Africa, Cyprus a Mediterranean island, and, no doubt, in many other places; and all by the power of the word, grace, and spirit of the Lord Jesus; with signs, and wonders, and miracles, wrought likely by those who thus went every where, upon the death of Stephen, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them. Acts xi. throughout.

C H A P. IX.

The Truth of Christianity sealed, with the Martyrdom of James the Apostle, the Brother of John, by the Deliverance of Peter out of Prison; and the Death of Herod Agrippa.—Acts xii.

IN the twelfth chapter, we have an account of James, the brother of John, the beloved disciple, sealing the truth as in Jesus with his blood, being beheaded, most likely, privately in prison by Herod Agrippa, now made king of Judea by Claudius the Roman emperor. However he was so exemplary for piety, righteousness, and the all of gospel holiness, that he was known by the name of James the Just, so famous for doctrine and miracles, faith and practice, life and conversation, in the world, that he was called James the Greater, being a true son of thunder, as well as consolation. Yet wicked Herod took off his head with the sword.

And see here, in the truth of what his Lord and Saviour told him long before, That he should drink of his cup, viz. of suffering, and be baptized with his baptism, Matt. xx. 23, which shews the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God; upon the faith of which Stephen, James the apostle, and many eminent Saints, loved not their lives unto the death. Rev. xii. 11. John v. 7, 12.

But

But when Herod Agrippa saw that what he had done to James pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also; for one sin naturally leads on to another: And a time-server and a man-pleaser can never be the servant of God.

The time when he apprehended Peter, and put him in prison, was at the passover, an ordinance peculiar to the Old Testament church, intending, after the passover, to bring him forth to the people; for there is not an Easter so much as mentioned in all the New Testament, nor the least foundation for it amongst Christians, nor never was. And so as he intended to please the obstinate and unbelieving Jews by the cruel martyrdom of the apostle Peter, he delivered him to be kept in close prison, by four quaternions of Roman soldiers, that is sixteen of them, well armed and accoutered for the purpose. But prayer was made, instant and earnest prayer was made without ceasing, of the church unto God for him, in the name of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, according to the will and word of God. And so if it was for the glory of God, and the good of the church, it was easy to say how the matter would go. Psa. xxv. 10. xxxiii. 10, 11. lxxxiv. 11, 12. Rom. viii. 28. Isa. xlvi. 10. Lam. iii. 37.

Thus Peter was kept, as Herod thought, in the securest manner, the closest confinement; so that all would soon be, as he and all his companions in this horrid wickedness so much wished and wanted.

But, behold, the very night before he would, if he could, have brought him forth to please himself, and all his wicked companions, with death in all its horrors; Peter cheerfully resting his soul and body, with all his concerns for time or eternity, before God the Father, in the hands of God the Son, his dear Son, was fast asleep between two soldiers, firmly bound with two iron chains; all the keepers before the door, or by the sides of the house, watching with all attention. Heb. iv. 3. 2 Thess. i. 7. Psa. cxvi. 7. Deut. xxxiii. 3. Eccl. ix. 1. John xiv. 1, 3, 27. xvi. 22, 33. Phil. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 31, 39.

And behold, let all men attend to it, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light, a supernatural body of light, shined

shined in the prison around him ; for as God as in Christ is light, love, and life to all that come to him in his Son, so all light, natural and material, as well as rational or spiritual, only is, and indeed only can be, of God.

And he smote Peter, gently stroked him on the side, it would appear, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands ; all his chains were loosed or broken. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals ; and so he did. And he saith unto him further, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out and followed him, and wist not as yet that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision ; which shews us, and all men, it was solely the doing of the Lord by his angel, or only the power and providence of God that had done it.

And when they were past the first and second ward, or fastness, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city of Jerusalem, which opened to them of its own accord. And they went out, and passed on through one street ; and forthwith the angel departed from him, as having done his business, and Peter had no more need of a guide with him. And when he was come to himself, all awake and recollected, he said, now I know of a surety, or for certain, that the Lord, the Lord Christ, hath sent his angel from heaven, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod and all his force, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had duly considered the matter, he went to his fellow-disciples and christian brethren, who joined with him in prayer, and was still at a throne of grace, no doubt, for him ; who could not think that he was yet delivered from the paw of this roaring lion Herod, until his own personal appearance amongst them, and his full account of this great matter, assured them of it.

And so he desires them to divide his and their joys in the Lord with one another, with James the Apostle, James the Less, and with all his christian friends and brethren in Jerusalem.

However,

However, James the Just, James the greater, was already gone to heaven; that as they had all joined in prayer to God for him, they might now join him also in thankfulness. For the multitude of them that believed in Christ were of one heart and one soul, Acts iv. 32.

And so he went to another place, where he was hid in God, and safe for the time from all their rage and cruelty. Matt. x. 23. Psa. xvii. 8, 27. v. 31, xix. 20. xci. 1. cxliii. 9. Prov. xviii. 10, which teaches us how powerful true faith in Christ and real christian prayer is with God.

But as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter, of whom they could give no account to Herod; who examined them, and commanded them to be put to death by the Roman law, as most likely they were: However, some suppose his own sudden death soon prevented theirs. But whatever was in this, as ashamed and vexed to the heart as a lion driven from his prey, he repairs to Cæsarea, his seat of government, some say to celebrate plays, or keep a festival in honour of the Roman emperor, his great friend.

And upon a set day, Josephus says the second day of the festival, having made peace with the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, these ancient and famous cities, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto the people; and they shouted it was the voice of God, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the Ghost.

But the word of God grew and multiplied greatly, Acts xii. at large.

Thus this proud and haughty, but little wicked king, indeed, soon became a sweet morsel for crawling worms; which is all divine light and evidence also in behalf of Christ, and the all of genuine Christianity.

S

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The great Success of the Gospel among the Gentiles as well as Jews, by Means of Paul and Barnabas preaching Christ to them.—Chap. xiii. 14.

IN the thirteenth chapter, we have the apostle Paul, and also Barnabas, solemnly set apart by prophets and teachers, ministers of Christ, at the express order of the Holy Ghost, by prayer and imposition of hands, with fasting in Antioch in Syria, for the work of the ministry, in that new, that grand, that glorious dispensation of God's grace as in Christ, equally directed to the Gentiles as well as Jews, already in some measure opened up by Peter, in the case of Cornelius and his friends, Acts x.

So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went from Antioch, the chief city of Syria, to Selicia, another city there, opposite to Cyprus, a Mediterranean island, all the way as they had opportunity, preaching Jesus and the resurrection, Christ and eternal life, only in and by him, for any sinner of mankind. And then sailing to Cyprus, and preaching Christ and the Gospel, in a manner over the island, converting Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor there, with many others, to the true faith of Christ, smiting Elymas the sorcerer, an obstinate, unbelieving Jew, with blindness for a season, in the name of the Lord Jesus; and from thence they sailed to Perga in Pamphilia, in the lesser Asia. And from thence they went to Antioch in Pisidia, nigh to Lydia, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

Here the apostle Paul unanswerably proves that Jesus is the true Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world, upon all in their synagogue, by the whole history of providence, with respect to Abraham and his seed, by the great promise of the Son of God as a Saviour, according to the flesh, of the seed of Abraham, and the family of David; of this man's seed hath God, according

ing to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus, faith he.

By the whole ministry of John the baptist, who preached repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, to all the people of Israel, pointing him out to them as with the finger, saying, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

By all Old Testament prophecies and predictions concerning him, by the joint witness and testimony of all his apostles and disciples, and especially by the witness and testimony of the Holy Ghost, with all his miraculous powers, gifts, and graces in, and upon all such as believe on and obey him as a Saviour; and also particularly by the power of the love and life, grace and spirit, of Christ, accompanying his word in all that do indeed believe.

Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fear God, to you is the word of this salvation sent of eternal life and everlasting salvation, by Jesus Christ, and by him alone. And we declare unto you glad tidings of good things, of great joy, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, the great promise of the Son of God as a Saviour, God hath now fulfilled the same unto us their children, and fully declared him also to be the Son of God with power, by his glorious resurrection from the dead, and all his exaltation and glory now in heaven.

Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that though this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him, who is both God and man in one person, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, nor indeed know how else, but by the righteousness of this Christ of God, you, nor none of mankind. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of by the prophets, as Hab. xv. Prov. i. 24, 27. Psa. ix. 17, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath; and great was the success of his preaching. Ver. 43, And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together, to hear the word of God. And when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles, for so hath the Lord commanded us, as Isa. xlix. 6.

And the Gentiles were glad, and magnified the word of the Lord; and as many as by grace, in good earnest, came to God in his Son, or were ordained to eternal life, believed to the saving of their souls. And these words of eternal life were published throughout all the country of Pisidia.

But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the chief people of the city against them, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their coasts; upon which they came into Iconium, the chief city of Lycaonia, in the lesser Asia, and they and all true disciples of Christ were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. at large. 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. 1 Tim. i. 15. iii. 16. Psa. xvi. 10, 11, which divinely demonstrates the divine mission and character of Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, the office and agency of the Holy Ghost, with the infallible truth and certainty of the word of God.

Thus, about twelve years or so, after the resurrection of Christ, the gospel of the grace of God was published to the Gentiles, of different nations, over the world, as well as to the Jews; and that, by the command of the Lord Christ and his holy spirit, according to Old Testament prophecies and promises. Psa. ii. 8. xxii. 30. lxxii. 5. with xcvi. xcvii. xcvi. Psalms at large. Isa. xlix. 6.

In the fourteenth chapter, we have both Paul and Barnabas preaching at Iconium, the principal city of Lycaonia, with great success; insomuch, that a great multitude, both
of

of Jews and Greeks, believed on Christ, and obeyed the Gospel: Such was the power and spirit of God accompanying the word of God. He who only can teach the heart of man, gave abundant testimony to the word of his grace; and granted signs and wonders, real miracles, to be done by their hand, each of them a divine attestation to the truth of their doctrine. But Satan and his agents were permitted of God to assault them, and wicked men intended to stone them to death; upon which they fled to Lystra and Derby, cities of Lycaonia, and the country about; and there they preached the gospel, like their Lord and Master; going about doing good, and all the good they could.

Paul healed a cripple at Lystra that could never walk, bidding him stand upright on his feet, and by the power of God he leaped and walked; which made the people imagine the gods were come down amongst them, and they wished to pay them divine homage. But they tell them they were men of like passions with themselves, who preached to them that they should turn from all such vanities as heathen idols, to the one only living and true God, that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things therein; and so restrained them from their foolish and wicked purpose.

But Satan and his agents are still restless: Obstinate and unbelieving Jews, both from Antioch and Iconium, pursue them to Lystra, and persuade such as themselves to stone Paul, because he was the chief speaker; and they drew him out of the city for dead. Howbeit, as his friends in Christ stood round about him weeping over him, and bathing him with their tears, in the name, and by the spirit and power of Christ, he rose before them all, and walked with them into the city. And the next day he went with Barnabas to Derby, another city in that country; and when they had preached Christ and the Gospel to, and fully instructed many there in the true faith of Christ, they returned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, endeavouring to confirm and establish the souls of all the disciples of Christ in the faith and obedience of the gospel, by doctrine, by exhortation, and application, assuring them, according to the words of Christ, (John xvi. 33) that through much tribulation they

they must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders, presbyters, gospel ministers, and rulers in every church, by prayer and imposition of hands, with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. And when they had gone through Pisidia and Pamphilia, and preached the word at the city of Perga there, they went down to Atalia, a city in Æolia. And thence sailed to Antioch, in Syria; from whence they set out, after they had been recommended to the grace of God as in Christ, for the very work and business they had now accomplished, in the mercy and by the help of God.

And there they relate before the whole church assembled, all that God had done with them, and how God, in his rich grace and abundant mercy, had now fully opened the door of faith and salvation, or of eternal life, by Jesus Christ alone, to the Gentiles equally as to the Jews, all over the world. Acts xiv. at large. Eph ii 18, 22. iii. 1, 12. Psal. ii. 8. Isa. xlix. 6. Which is all demonstration itself in behalf of Christ and Christianity.

C H A P. XI.

The grand Decision as to Christian Liberty, through the Holy Ghost, by the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, with the amazing Spread and Success of the Gospel over the World.—Chaps xv. xvi.

IN the fifteenth chapter, about eighteen years or so after the resurrection of Christ, we have the apostles and elders, or presbyters, at Jerusalem, assembled for the purpose, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, according to the word of God, fully and finally deciding in two very grand and divinely important matters to the whole church of God.

Some Judaizing teachers came to Antioch, in Syria, from Jerusalem, and taught the christians there, that unless they were circumcised according to the law of Moses, they could not be saved by Jesus Christ. And so the churches at Antioch

Antioch (for it was a great city, and very many christians there already) agreed to send Paul and Barnabas, now a long time their minister, with certain others, up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question, which mistaken or false brethren had thrown in amongst them as a bone of contention.

Accordingly, Paul and Barnabas, with these other commissioners that came with them from Antioch, repaired to Jerusalem; and as they go through Phenicia and Samaria, and also at Jerusalem, they fully declare the conversion of the Gentiles, and what great things God had already done for and amongst them by their means, both by doctrines and miracles, and by the power of his grace and spirit accompanying his word and ordinances, which gives great joy to all believing Jews as well as Gentiles.

And even at Jerusalem there seems to have been some of the sect of the Pharisees which had embraced Christianity, that taught it was necessary for christians to be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses. And so the apostles and elders come together to consider of this matter, this great matter, in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, according to the word of God.

And when they had long considered, and reasoned much upon this great affair, this vast concern, Peter rose up in the assembly, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice amongst us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe; as in the case of Cornelius, Acts x. And this is just what God foretold, and promised by his prophets, in a manner from the first intimation of a Saviour. Gen. iii. 15. viii. 27. xii. 3. Psal. ii. 8. xxii. 30. lxxii. 5. Psalms xcvi. xcvii. xcvi. lxxii. 5. Isa. xlix. 6.

And God, the God of love and of all grace, who knoweth the hearts of all men, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, with his miraculous powers, supernatural gifts, and saving graces, even as he did unto us on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii.) making now no difference, nor the least distinction, between us Jews and them Gentiles, purifying their hearts by faith as well as ours. Now, therefore, why

why tempt or provoke ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? It was, at least, very heavy and grievous to us.

But now we believe, as christians, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, being justified before God by his blood and righteousness, and sanctified by his word and spirit, even as all believing Gentiles also are and only can be saved.

Then all the multitude, the whole assembly of apostles and elders, kept silence, a profound silence, and gave audience, listened with all attention to Paul and Barnabas, declaring, fully declaring, what miracles and wonders, and great things, God had wrought among the Gentiles, so many different Gentile nations, by them.

And after they had done, James, the son of Alphaeus; James the less, who, it is likely, succeeded James the son of Zebedee; James the greater, as the apostle of the circumcision at Jerusalem, after he was beheaded by Herod, (for God will never want instruments to work his work, or serve his own purpose) answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me; Simon hath declared, how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name, by his ministry. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord Jehovah, who doth all these things." Hof. ix. 11, 12. Isa. ix. 6, 7. xvi. 5. xxxiii. 20. lv. 3. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psal. ii. 8. lxxii. 5, 9, 16, 17. lxxxix. 34. xix. 29. cx. 1, 3.

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world, v. 18; perfectly known from eternity, before time, when they only existed in his purpose, through time and to eternity, when time shall be no more, in one continued view. 2 Pet. iii. 8. Psal. cxxxix. 6. cxlv. 5.

Wherefore my sentence is, my full judgment and best opinion of this great matter is, that we trouble not them who

who from among the Gentiles are turned unto God, further than the religion of Jesus, the royal law of Christ, dictates, and makes necessary in some measure for the time, unto our brethren of the Jews that believe, who, although they have embraced the gospel, yet may be still much prejudiced in favour of Moses and the Law, and will be, until they know more of Christ and the Gospel. But that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, of all those false gods which were indeed no gods, which before their conversion to Christ and Christianity they universally worshipped and served, and from fornication, whether spiritual, as all idolatry or idol-worship; or carnal, as in the flesh, which has long greatly abounded among the heathens: Both of which were always expressly forbid by every law of Moses, as well as now of Christ. *Exod. xx. 1, 6, 14. Deut. xxiii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Eph. v. 3.*

And from things strangled, which the law of Moses forbid any Jew the use of. *Lev. vii. 24, 25. xxii. 8. Deut. xiv. 21.*

And from blood; the use of which was also forbid under the Old Testament dispensation: As to Noah, *Gen. ix. 4*; and by Moses to all the many thousands of Israel. For the ceremonial dispensation begun, no doubt, with Adam's first sacrifice in the faith of Christ, as we have fully shewn already. *Lev. iii. 17. vii. 26, 27. xvii. 12, 14. Deut. xii. 16, 23. xv. 23.*

Blood seems to have been forbidden during the whole ceremonial law, that is, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ; because the blood of the sacrifice was a glaring figure of the blood of Christ, to be shed upon the cross in the fulness of time: For Christ was the sum and substance, the very life and glory, of their whole dispensation. Thus they were to use such and such things only for food, and also forbid the use of others, to teach them they were to live according to the will and appointment of God only.

Accordingly, the apostle James assigns as a reason for all these, for Moses of old time, or long since, hath in every city them that preach him, being read in their synagogues every sabbath-day.

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And therefore for Gentile Christians to abstain from all pollutions of idols, and from fornication, to which they had formerly, viz. before their conversion, been so much addicted, was their unquestionable duty, by every law of Moses, and now also of Christ, under the gospel, by all the authority of heaven. And that, for the time, it would appear, more like Christians to abstain from the use of blood, and also things strangled, lest they should stumble weak brethren in Christ, or give offence to obstinate unbelieving Jews, as yet without the church of Christ. Whosoever considers all these circumstances, will readily allow the advices here given the Gentile converts, were truly apostolic, christian, and divine.

And to him they all agree as one man, and accordingly wrote an epistle to all their christian brethren in Antioch, and all over Syria, and in Cilicia, and so every where of the Gentile nations.

It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than those necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

And they sent with it Paul and Barnabas, Judas and Silas, chosen men; which divine letter gives all Gentile Christians great joy in the Lord, for whom the Son makes free, they are free indeed, John viii. 36; which shews us, and all the world, that the religion of Jesus is wholly a religion of love, peace, and truth; and it makes all that are blest with it, in its spirit and power, God-like and Christ-like also.

In the sixteenth chapter, we have the office and character of the Son of God as a Saviour, and the truth and certainty of the all of Christianity, illustrated in this glorious and divine manner. Thus Paul and Barnabas, both great and good men, and dear companions in Christ, and fellow-labourers in the gospel, differing about John and Mark, who had left them before at Pamphilia, and would not go with them to the work of the gospel.

Barnabas, upon his repentance, was all for him going with them; Paul was against it, lest he should apostatize again,

again, and disgrace the gospel; for the best of men are but men at the best. But this difference and parting of theirs, in the over-ruling providence of God, was a mean of the furtherance of the gospel. Barnabas, with John, go to the isle of Cyprus; Paul and Silas come to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and there they preached Christ and the gospel with great success. And here Paul circumcises Timothy, because his father was a Greek, that he might give as little occasion of stumbling to the Jews as possible, but chose Timothy as a companion, who, from a child, had known the holy scriptures, and who was afterwards made an evangelist. And as they passed through different cities and countries in Asia, they delivered them the decrees of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, which shewed all believing Gentiles their glorious liberty and freedom in Christ. John viii. 36. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

And so the churches of Christ were established in the faith, and increased in number daily. And after they had gone through Phrygia and Galatia, preaching Christ and the gospel, Jesus and eternal life, still with great success, and being forbid by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel any more at the time in Asia, they came to Troas, in the lesser Phrygia, nigh the Hellespont, a strait in the sea which divides Europe from Asia.

And as the God of love, and of all grace, mercifully intended to open up the same grand and glorious dispensation of his grace as in Christ, to the sons of Japhet in Europe, which had now for a considerable time been made known to the sons of Shem in Asia, with part of the seed of Japhet the elder brother there. The Son of God, by an angel, calls his servants. An angel, in the appearance and habit, and with the speech of a Macedonian, stood before Paul in a vision by night, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. And as soon as Paul had seen the vision, they endeavoured to go to Greece the first opportunity, assuredly gathering or inferring from the vision that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel there. Accordingly Paul, Silas, and Timotheus, loosing from Troas, came to Samothracia, in the isle of Samos, and next day to

Neapolis, a city of Thrace, the eastmost part of all Europe; and from thence to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, where they abode certain days, and preached Christ and the gospel. Here Paul converts Lydia and others, by the power of the word, grace, and spirit of Christ, to the faith and obedience of the gospel, upon the Sabbath-day, and casts the devil out of a certain damsel, a sorceress, that brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, which followed Paul and Silas many days, and cried aloud, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

The devil did this by her, no doubt, not in honour of Christ, or to make him known, but to raise a persecution against them; upon which Paul being grieved that she thus followed them, and being full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, turned to her, and in the name of Jesus Christ commanded the evil spirit to come out of her, and he came out the same hour.

And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains, by her juggling tricks and soothsayings, was gone, they laid violent hands on Paul and Silas, and carried them before their magistrates. In consequence of which, they were beaten with many stripes, and committed to prison, the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks. But at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sung praises to God, and the prisoners heard them; for sanctified afflictions send all good people to their prayers; and that man, thus blessed with the spirit of faith in Christ and true christian prayer, can never be placed in such circumstances in this world, as he can be greatly to pity. And so they not only prayed, but cheerfully sung praises to God; for there is always enough in Christ and Christianity to support and comfort all real Saints and sincere Christians, and that as the dignified sons and children of God. Col. ii. 9, 10. John xiv. 19. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23.

And behold their prayers are soon both heard and answered, and their praises accepted of God for Christ's sake.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the very foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately
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all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. They were all set at perfect liberty, for the sake of Paul and Silas, the servants of God.

And when the poor jailor awoke, and saw what had happened, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing the prisoners all fled, and knowing that, by the Roman law, he must answer for it by his life. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprung in, and came trembling, and fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas, or before them, and gladly brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Thus they preach Christ and the gospel to him, and to all his house; and the grace and spirit of Christ, accompanying the word, soon implants previous and divine faith in Christ in their hearts and souls, so that they not only believe and are baptized, but they rejoice to profess, and also love Christ, he, and all his, straightway.

And as an undoubted evidence of all this, he not only performs every humane and christian office to them, as taking them into his house, washing their wounds, and setting meat before them, as the servants of the most high God, but also rejoices to believe in God with all his house.

And next day he was glad to tell them the Roman magistrates had sent to let them go. But Paul said they have not acted like Romans in beating and imprisoning us, untried and uncondemned, being Romans born; let them come themselves, and fetch us out. Which they were glad to do, lest they should have been called to an account for their unwarrantable conduct, Acts xvi. at large. All of which shews that Jesus is in very deed the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world; and that the gospel of the grace of God is, and must be, all eternal truth,

C H A P. XII.

Paul at Athens.—Chap. xvii.

In the seventeenth chapter, we have a further divine and glorious account of Christ and Christianity, by means of Paul and his companions in different places in Greece, and especially at Athens, the seat of Grecian and Roman learning, and like the mother of arts and sciences to the heathen world.

Thus, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, cities of Macedonia, they came to Thessalonica, the chief city there, preaching Christ and the gospel; Jesus, and eternal life only in and by him for any sinner of mankind.

As there was a synagogue of the Jews at Thessalonica, Paul, as his manner was, went into their synagogue three sabbath-days running, and shewed them, from Moses and the prophets, yea unanswerably demonstrated to them, both the sufferings of Christ, and his glory that should follow; and that this Jesus, whom I preach to you, is in very deed the Christ of God; the chosen, the called, the sent, and the sealed of God; as the glorious medium of intercourse between heaven and earth; as Mediator and Saviour; as the sole and the blest mean of all actual and saving communion and fellowship between an infinitely pure and holy God, and sinful offending mortals; as, at once, the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation. Gen. iii. 15. Job xxxiii. 24. Psal. xl. 6, 8. xxii. 10, 22. cx. 7. xlvii. 5. lxviii. 18. Isa. liii. 4, 12. lxiii. 1, 4. Zech. xii. 10. Luke xxiv. 26. 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. John iii. 16. xiv. 6. vi. 37. Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

And some of the Jews believed in Christ, and associated with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few: Such was the power of the word, grace, and spirit of Christ.

But the obstinate unbelieving Jews raised a great uproar;
upon

upon which, the brethren sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, another city of Macedonia, where there was a synagogue of the Jews also. But these were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so. And therefore many of these Jews believed in Christ to salvation; and of Greeks, men and women, great numbers. The God of love and of all grace opening their hearts and souls by his word, grace, and spirit, to attend in a saving manner to the things of God and of his Christ.

Upon which, the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica persecute them still at Berea; and so the brethren sent away Paul, against whom the Jews were most enraged; but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

Thus Paul is conducted to Athens, commanding, by his conductors, Silas and Timotheus to come to him with all speed. But while he waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred, his whole soul was moved with holy indignation, when he saw the city full of idols, wholly given to idolatry and idol-worship. For an idol is nothing in the world, and unspeakably worse than nothing; an abomination in the sight of God, and the destruction of the soul of the worshipper, Exod. xx. 3, 6. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and also in the market daily with them that met with him.

Thus our great apostle, in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, easily proved upon the Jews, and all devout persons in Athens, that Jesus, whom he preached, was indeed the Christ of God, the one and only Mediator between God and men, and the sole Saviour of sinners. Luke ii. 11. Matt. xvi. 16. Acts ix. 20. xvii. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

And with the same ease he confounds all worldly wisdom, all Grecian learning and eloquence, all false philosophy or sophistry whatever, in their greatest philosophers at Athens; and soon defeats their greatest men with their own weapons, wisdom and philosophy.

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Then, says the evangelist Luke, certain philosophers of the epicureans and the stoics encountered him, supposing easily to master him by their wisdom and philosophy. But he soon shewed them they knew little, and that little they did know, they greatly abused; and that which it concerned them most to know, they knew nothing of: Not a soul of them knew the God that made them, nor the Son of God that came to seek and to save them when lost.

This Jesus, this Christ of God, that I preach, publish, and declare unto you; this Jesus and the resurrection, this Christ of God, and eternal life and everlasting salvation only in and by him, ye are all ignorant of: Your doctrine of fate or predestination, (unless you understood by it the eternal purpose in the all-discerning mind, with the will, the appointment, and the providence of Almighty God, as to any person or thing which you know nothing of) are words without a meaning. The making of the world by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, is a maxim, reason, wisdom, and philosophy could never dictate. Your doctrine of ease, of apathy, or not being in the least degree affected with any thing, or concerned about it, is turning you all into stocks and stones, such as your gods are. All your maxims of wisdom and rules of philosophy can never make you truly happy here, much less hereafter; nor bring you nearer to God your Maker, the fountain of happiness, the uncreated fountain of being and of all blifs. For the world by wisdom, their own wisdom, ever since sin entered into it, never knew God, (1 Cor. i. 21) as indeed the lives, and especially the deaths of your wisest men and greatest philosophers, may teach you all.

Upon which they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, or Mars Hill, the chief or highest, the supreme court in all Athens, most likely to turn him over into better hands than their own. Some of them desired to hear more of this new doctrine; others mocked, as knowing nothing: Some supposed he meant to add to the number of their many gods, which were indeed no gods; some of them were desirous to hear any thing new, whatever it was. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, or the court,
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the supreme court of the Areopagites, and thus addresses them all in a body, philosophers, rulers, or who or whatever they were: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, for your whole city is full of idols, of idol gods, which are indeed no gods at all; and ye are all the grossest idolators, bowing to a thing of nought, and what can really do nothing for you. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, the many false gods ye worship, I found there, amongst many others, an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship.

Whether this altar was erected upon relief from a grievous pestilence their other gods could do nothing for, as one of them, viz. Diogenes Laertius says; or upon victory over a numerous Persian army that invaded them, as another says, Philippidus. How absurd and foolish for wise men to worship they know not what, nor who!

It was not possible true wisdom or philosophy, right reason or religion, could have directed you to such a measure, and therefore you must be greatly, if not altogether, without these: But him declare I unto you. God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands as your gods do, neither is he worshipped with men's hands, nor made by them, as your's are, as though he needed any thing of any man; seeing he giveth to all life and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For he fills heaven and earth, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him: He is every where present; and in him we live, move, and have our being: Any creature cannot subsist a moment without him, for we are also his offspring. For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device, as your gods are; yea, the apostle shows them that some of

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their own poets, or philosophers, gave them similar views of God, which they could only have from divine revelation by the Jews, as Aratus, Plato, Heraclitus. Thus this great apostle having demonstrated to them all a God, a Providence, and a soul in man; and that not only by the word and works of God, but even by the maxims of their own philosophers, he shews them there will, there must be a resurrection of the dead, a general judgment, a world to come. In the times of this ignorance, such as ye are still in, says he, God winked at; but now, by Jesus Christ, by his word and spirit, commandeth all men every where to repent, and believe the gospel; to seek repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, that so they may not perish, but have everlasting life: Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Some that neither knew God nor themselves, mocked at the doctrine of a resurrection; others desired to hear more of it: But Paul departed from among them. And Dionysius, the Areopagite; Damaris, a woman, and certain others, believed through grace, and cleaved unto him. Thus, in the twentieth year after the resurrection of Christ or so, Paul preached Christ and the gospel at Athens, and shews all men that Christianity is the cause, the counsel, and the work of God; and that all the wisdom, with indeed the power and policy of this world, cannot overthrow it. Matt. xvi. 16, 18. v. 18. Acts v. 38, 39, 40.

C H A P. XIII.

Paul at Ephesus, with the glorious Success of the Gospel.

—Chaps. xviii. xix. xx.

In the eighteenth chapter we have the apostle Paul preaching Jesus and eternal life to the Jews at Corinth, a place of great trade and commerce, and proving upon them that Jesus was the Christ; but when many of them

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contradicted and blasphemed, he turned to the Gentiles, where he planted a famous and flourishing church of Christ, continuing there a year and six months teaching the word of God among them. From Cenchrea, the sea-port belonging to Corinth, he sails to Ephesus, the metropolis or chief city in all the lesser Asia, and a sea-port, where he also afterwards plants a famous and flourishing church of Christ, and where Apollos, an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures, a Jew, is instructed more fully in the way of Christ by Aquila and Priscilla, and, by the appointment of God, becomes a zealous, fervent, and successful preacher of Christ, proving from the holy scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. Acts xviii. at large: Which is all divine demonstration to all the world that the Lord Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, by grace believeth.

In the nineteenth chapter, while Apollos was at Corinth preaching Christ and the gospel, the apostle Paul having visited the churches of Christ at Jerusalem, in his return passes through Galatia and Phrygia, and also Pontus and Bithynia, watering the churches of Christ already planted there, and comes, according to his promise, to Ephesus, where he preaches Christ two years; baptizes twelve men, disciples of John the Baptist, and confers the Holy Ghost upon them; works many miracles in the name of Christ, casts out devils, and heals diseases; and, by means of handkerchiefs or aprons taken from his body, cures the most inveterate diseases among the people: And the very devils in this idolatrous city, famed over the world for the temple and the worship of Diana, tremble at the name of Jesus; while at the same time they triumph over the seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, chief of the Jewish priests there. They were so wicked, as vagabond Jews, as they dealt in magic and divination, in spells and charms, in books of judicial astrology, casting nativities, telling of fortunes, raising and laying of spirits, interpreting of dreams, and foretelling future events and the like, (for all of which wicked practices Ephesus was noted over the world) as to take upon them, as they thought it would greatly advance their trade, to call over such as are

possessed with the devil the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." They thought if they could cast out devils, as Paul did, in the name of Jesus, they would make a fine business of it. But the devil answered, "Jesus I know, the holy One of God; Paul I know, his faithful servant in the gospel; but who are ye? the servant of sin and satan." And instantly the man, in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, overcame them, and prevailed against them, it would appear all seven, He and the devil together; so that, as soon as they could, they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Thus the name of the Lord Jesus soon divides the devil's house even at Ephesus, where he had so long reigned, against itself, and was greatly magnified above all the powers of earth and hell there; insomuch, that many of those that used the same wicked arts and curious charms as these base Jews, confessed their sinful deeds, and brought their books of magic and spells, and burnt them before all men, likely in the streets of Ephesus; and counting the price of them, found it fifty thousand pieces of silver: Some compute the sum to fifteen hundred pounds of our money, which now would have been a very great sum indeed. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed over Jew and Gentile, insomuch, that a truly famous and flourishing church of Christ was planted and established by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, at Ephesus, the chief city in all the lesser Asia, where sin and satan had so long reigned in a manner without controul.

After these things were done at Ephesus, Paul purposed in the spirit, or was moved to it by the Holy Ghost, first to revisit Macedonia and Achaia, in a manner the whole country of Greece, and then go to Jerusalem; and after that, God willing, to see Rome, then the mistress of the world, or first city in it, which gave law to many people and nations, but full of idol-gods and idolatry, or idol-worship, knowing that the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God, to the pulling down of all the strong-holds of sin and satan; designing, if it pleased God, to teach and preach Jesus and eternal life to them;

them; Christ as the wisdom, and the power of God unto salvation, to all them that believe in Christ, and obey his Gospel. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 26. xvi. 25, 27.

Accordingly, sending Timotheus and Erastus to Macedonia, to Greece, in Europe, he himself stays some time still in Asia, to establish the Ephesians, and others, the more in the faith of Christ. For Demetrius, a silver-smith to Diana, and others of the like occupation with himself, soon wished to move heaven and earth, out of pretended zeal for their great goddess Diana, whom, say they, all Asia and the world worship, but principally for the total loss of their gains and worldly wealth. For this, Paul, not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, in the name of Jesus Christ, whom he preacheth, hath trodden down all the gods, that such as we make, as no gods at all. Upon which, the whole city was all in confusion and tumult, and the deluded votaries of their goddess cried, with all their might, about the space of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" who was indeed nothing in the world, and worse than nothing, and less than the meanest of her craftsmen. But, in the over-ruling providence of God, the town-clerk soon stills their tumults with the terror of the Roman law. Acts xix. at large. Which is all divine light and evidence for Christ and Christianity, and proclaims aloud to all the world, that all this was, and only could be, the work and doing of the Lord.

In the twentieth chapter, after the uproar was ceased, Paul called the disciples of Christ together at Ephesus, and embraced them, exhorting them, no doubt, to be strong in the grace of Christ, in the Lord Jehovah, and in the power of his might; and so departed from them with the design to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and given them much such exhortation in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, came into Greece, and there abode three months, preaching the word of God, as he had opportunity, and then returns to Asia, and preaches Christ, and administers the Lord's Supper at Troas, and raises Eutychus to life again; passes through different places, and comes to Miletus, a famous city, adjoining Caria; from whence he sends to Ephesus,
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and calls the elders, presbyters, or ministers of the church of Christ there. For he hastened, if it was possible for him, to be at Jerusalem, the day of Pentecost. And when they were come unto him, he appeals to them as to the manner and circumstances of his life amongst them, his doctrine he had taught them, (testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks) repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, not shunning to declare unto them the whole counsel of God.

But now, says he, I go, bound in the spirit, unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide or wait for me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy; and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am free from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God, the whole truth as in Jesus, and that only take heed, good heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and unto all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, christian bishops, true gospel ministers, real servants of God in the gospel of his son, overseers of the flock of Christ, to feed the church of God with the word and ordinances of God only, with the word of Christ solely; which church of God and flock of Christ he hath purchased with his own blood.

Beware, therefore, of false teachers, follow sound doctrine, remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all; committing and commending them all to God the Father, in the hands of his dear Son. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, they should see his face no more.

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And in a body they accompanied him all to the ship, Acts xx. at large, which also shews the truth and certainty of the word of God.

C H A P. XIV.

Paul's Journey to Jerusalem, and God still with him.—
Chaps. xxi. xxii.

IN the twenty-first chapter, we have an account of Paul's journey to Jerusalem, and notwithstanding he was told by Agabus a prophet, he should be bound at Jerusalem, and delivered to the Gentiles, which also took place, he would not be dissuaded, telling them, What do ye mean, to weep and to break mine heart, for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus?

And then his friends ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done. And God, in his special, holy, and adorable providence, still preserved and kept him, amidst all his trials and dangers.

And Paul being permitted by the chief captain of the temple, a Roman officer, to speak for himself, he stood on the stairs, likely of the temple, and addressed his brethren of the Jews, in their mother tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence, which I now make unto you.

And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence. And he saith, I am verily a Jew, born at Tarsus, of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, a Pharisee, of the Pharisees, taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day; and I persecuted this way of Christ unto the death, bringing and delivering into prison both men and women; as also the high-priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders, if you please to look at their records, from whom I received letters of commission and authority to Damascus, with
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an armed force, to bring all Christians, bound to Jerusalem, to be put to death.

And it came to pass as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me; and I fell to the ground, and heard a voice, saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus, and one Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, and having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight; and the same hour I looked upon him. And he said, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Thus Paul, for the love of Jesus, and out of good will to his brethren the Jews, at the hazard of his life, gives them a history of his former life and conversation, before he was a Christian and an apostle of Christ, of his conversion to Christ and Christianity, and acknowledges his sin in persecuting Christians, and all that he might lead them to Christ, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Upon which the chief captain is still the instrument of providence in preserving him, as a Roman, from immediate death and the grave, until the Son of God had served all the purposes of his grace and providence with him in a present world, Acts xxi. xxii. chapters. Which shews all the world that Christ is, and must be, an entirely suitable and all-sufficient Saviour; who can, with infinite ease, sup-
port

port all his own servants, as the dignified sons of God, at all times, in all circumstances, in which they can be placed, whether in life or death; and so that Christianity is all divine and eternal truth. For who, or what, in all the universe of God, but Christ and Christianity, could have done such a thing as this, as made of the greatest of sinners, the chief of Saints, or of the most violent of persecutors, one of the greatest of men, the very first of Christians, and apostles of Christ? Let all the wisdom of this world say, if it can, if ever otherwise, there was such a thing done since the sun shone? 2 Cor. ii. 14.

C H A P. XV.

Paul's noble Defence of the Christian Faith before Felix; Felix trembling, while Paul preached.—Chap. xxiii. xxiv.

IN the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters, we have Paul brought before the council of the Jews by the chief captain, asserting his innocence before them, that he had lived in all good conscience before God, since his conversion; upon which the high-priest commands them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth; and Paul tells him, God shall smite thee, thou hypocrite, who sits to judge me by law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law, every law of God or heaven, which would not fall to the ground. Then they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high-priest? For as he did not act like a priest of God, Paul either did not know he was the high-priest, or else he thought he justly deserved the severe reprimand; for a due deference, he acknowledges, always belongs to God's ministers. Exod. xxii. 28.

Upon which Paul, understanding that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question. I believe in Jesus Christ, and the resurrection, and eternal life by him; the resurrection of the dead,

small and great. Which set them all in an uproar; for the Sadducees denied the resurrection, and that there was either angel or spirit, but the Pharisees confess both. Matt. xxii. 23, 29. Acts xxiii. 8, 9.

And the dissension was so great amongst them, that the captain commanded the soldiers to go down, and take him by force, and bring him into the castle for safety: Such was the providence of God about him.

And the following night the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. Fear not, I am with thee.

But no less than forty of the wicked Jews bind themselves by an oath before God, that they would neither eat nor drink, until they had killed Paul, in a manner whether God would or not. But who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Lam. iii. 37. The Son of God can soon out-shoot the wicked in their own bow. Paul's sister's son overhears their conspiracy, and informs Paul of it, safe in the castle. He calls a centurion, and desires him to carry the young man to the captain, he has something to tell him; which he readily does.

And the captain sends Paul with a letter, strongly guarded, by night, to Felix, the Roman governor at Cæsarea, and commands all his accusers to follow him there. For God leaves not his own in any case. Psa. xxvii. 9, 10. xxxvii. 28. cxix. 121. Heb. xiii. 5.

And after five days, Ananias the high-priest, with the elders, and Tertullus an orator, came down to Cæsarea. And Tertullus informed the governor against Paul.

When the court was set, and Paul, as a prisoner, brought before them, after flattering compliments to Felix as a Roman governor, with the consent of the high-priest and elders, he accuses Paul as a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition among all the Jews over the world, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarines, and a profaner of the temple; complaining also of Lyfias, the chief captain, who took him violently out of their hands, when they would have judged him accord-

according to their law, he should have said, put him to death, commanding them also to come here.

But Felix beckoning to Paul to speak for himself, as every Roman by their law had this liberty, he cheerfully answers for himself, and presumes, as he had been so long a judge for this nation, it might be safer for him, as he expected a fair hearing. You must know then, Felix, that there are but yet twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship, and they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people in their synagogues, nor in the city, neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me; but this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets, and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. This is my religion, and all my religion as a Christian and an apostle of Christ; and this is at once the religion of all believing Jews or Gentiles whatever. Isa. viii. 20. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings; whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult, who ought to have been here before thee, and object if they had ought against me; or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day.

Upon which Felix tells them, when Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter; and so dismisses them for the time, and commands a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have some liberty.

And after certain days, when Felix, with his wife Drusilla, a Jewess, came, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righte-

ousness, temperance, and of judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. He hoped Paul would have given him money for liberty; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But being disappointed in this, and willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, when Festus came into Felix's room, as Roman governor, two years after, he left Paul bound, Acts xxiii. xxiv. which also fully shews the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God.

C H A P. XVI.

*Paul appealing unto Cæsar, and God still preserving him—
Agrippa almost persuaded by him to be a
Christian.—Chaps. xxv. xxvi.*

IN the twenty fifth and twenty-sixth chapters, we have Paul before both Festus and king Agrippa, answering for himself, and appealing unto Cæsar, the Roman emperor, at Rome itself. For Festus coming to Cæsarea, as Roman governor, in place of Felix, soon went to Jerusalem, where the Jews solicit him much to bring up Paul there, that they might kill him by the way; but, in the over-ruling providence of God, Festus refused, as it was a Roman law to give no man up to death, till he had his accusers face to face. And so more than ten days after, he came down to Cæsarea, and next day the Jews, his accusers, lay many and grievous complaints against him, which they could not prove, while he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor the temple, nor Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all. But Festus wishing to gain the favour of the Jews, asks Paul, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? Upon which Paul, as a Roman citizen, refused, and was laid under the necessity of appealing unto Cæsar. And Festus, as a Roman governor, being obliged to it, says unto Cæsar, Shalt thou go? Which teaches us that the Holy Jesus, who rules by law and love,

by his word, grace, and spirit, in all believing hearts and souls, rules with the same infinite ease ever over and amidst all his and his people's enemies. Psal. cx. 1, 3. Thus king Agrippa, made king of Chalcis by Claudius the emperor, son to Herod Agrippa that slew James the apostle, and was eaten of worms, with his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea to salute Festus, and with him joy of his office. Agrippa also desires to hear him; and when the principal people of Cæsarea were assembled, Agrippa tells him, "Paul, thou art permitted to speak for thyself."

Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and answered for himself: "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews; wherefore, I beseech thee, to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most strict sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee; and now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, for God to raise the dead?" And so gives them a full and particular account of his own conversion to Christ and Christianity, with the grand end and glorious intention of the Son of God, in thus plucking him as a brand out of the burning, and making him a Christian and an apostle: It was to be a minister and a witness for God and his Christ, for Christ and Christianity, to Jew and Gentile over the world; and especially to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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Upon which Agrippa tells him, "Thou almost persuaded me to be a Christian." And Paul said before them all, "Would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Thus this great apostle both lives to and suffers for Christ, and shews, by his own living example, the truth of Christianity. Acts xxv. xxvi. chapters.

C H A P. XVII.

Paul's Voyage to Rome, his Life, and then his Death and Martyrdom there ; and still greater in Death than in Life.—Chaps xxvii. xxviii.

IN the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters, we have Paul's voyage to Rome, and his life and death there at last as a martyr, for the love and sake of Jesus, after he had preached Christ and the gospel there two whole years, in his own hired house, with all confidence, no man forbidding him, receiving all that came in unto him.

Thus as the distance by land from Cæsarea to Rome would have been so great, they behoved to go by sea. And they went first in a ship of Adramyticum, a sea-port of Africa, which traded with Syria, it would appear ; and then from Myra, the chief city of Lycia, in Asia, in a ship of Alexandria in Egypt, bound for Italy ; which ship was wrecked and totally lost, and broken to pieces : But all their lives were preserved by the power and providence of Almighty God, by means of Paul, and for his sake ; through his influence and power with God in the name of Christ, through the Holy Ghost by faith and prayer. "And now I exhort, (says he to them all, in their greatest danger, their deepest distress) be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of life among you, but of the ship : For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, ' Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar ; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with

with thee.' " Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island." And, according to the word of God, they got all safe to land, after their greatest disaster, upon an island then called Melita, now it would appear Malta, in the Mediterranean, between Sicily and Africa. And so at last, in another Alexandrian ship, they got safe to Italy, and then to Rome; for God's word can never fail nor fall to the ground. Matt. v. 18. John x. 35.

How easy must it have been for the Son of God, who made, and every moment upholds, rules, and governs the world, and all things in it, to preserve his servant, and all that were with him, amidst the most impetuous of elements, the winds and the seas! Matt. viii. 26, 27. Mark iv. 41. Luke viii. 25.

The evangelist Luke tells us, who wrote this glorious and sacred history, in the name of Christ, through the Holy Ghost, and also attended the apostle Paul, it would appear, until his death, his glorious martyrdom at Rome, by wicked Nero, then emperor, that even the barbarous people of Melita were very friendly and hospitable to Paul, and those that were with him, after their total shipwreck. " They shewed us no little kindness, for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the rain and the cold," says Luke.

And Paul gathering a bundle of sticks, and laying them on the fire, there came a viper out of the fire, and fastened on his hand, which was always deadly to them; who inferred he must have been a murderer, or some very great sinner, that divine vengeance suffered not to live, although he had escaped from the sea so narrowly. They all expected his instant death; but he shook the deadly animal into the fire, which soon destroyed it. And they looked a long time, and saw no harm come to him; then soon changed their mind, and thought him a god come in amongst them, at least more than a man.

In this island there was one Publius, who had a large estate there, the chief man in the place, likely governor, who

received Paul and all with him, and entertained them courteously three days; whose father lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux. Paul, by miracle, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, made him perfectly whole in an instant, and also all others that came to him, of whatever disease they had. And they, in return, put into the ship, another ship, from Alexandria, whatever was necessary for them when they went away.

Thus God, that clothes the grass of the field, and feeds even the ravens, provided for their wants; and so in God's good time and way they got to Rome. Some christian brethren hearing of Paul's arrival, came to meet him at Appii Forum, about fifty miles from Rome; others at the Three Taverns, about twenty or more; which providential circumstance greatly encouraged Paul in his bonds.

And so he enters Rome as a prisoner in chains, for the love and sake of Jesus and the resurrection, of Christ and the gospel; and is delivered to a Roman soldier to keep, to whom they suppose he was chained; which shews us how little there is and must be in the greatest and best things of this world. Many of base character, real butchers of mankind, had often entered that city in great pomp and triumph: Paul, the greatest and best of men, the first of Christians, and the very chief of the apostles of Christ, that had been such a great blessing both to the church and world, and is to this day, entered as a prisoner in chains. For, says he to his brethren the Jews, that were now at Rome in great numbers, during the five years of Nero's reign, since Claudius's act of banishment was passed against them, as the true cause of his imprisonment, For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And so he preaches Christ to, and lives Christ among them; a prisoner for Christ, for the space of two whole years, in his own hired house.

And the first time he was brought before Nero, as a prisoner that had appealed to him, all men forsook him; but his Lord and Master stood by him, and supported him, as a faint and an apostle of his. And whither, as tradition goes, he was liberated, and went as far as Jerusalem, and visited the many churches he had planted both in Asia and Greece,
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and then returned to Rome again, when Nero made laws, and raised persecution against the Christians, or remained there till then; however this was, he was brought a second time before Nero, and condemned to death, it is said, to be beheaded; Nero's reason, it is said, was a favourite mistress he had converted; and as for him to live was Christ, and to die was eternal gain; and he was much greater in death than ever he had been in life, truly great as he was.

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps his heart and mind, through Christ Jesus the Lord.

He triumphs in Christ, over sin and satan, over the world and the flesh, over death and the grave, over hell and all the powers of darkness; being filled with joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and in God as in him, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Thus he tells Timothy a little before his death, I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8.

Could ever a general at the head of his army, however victorious, narrate his greatest victories with that composure and greatness of mind, with that exalted joy and triumph, that profound peace and pleasure, that supreme delight and divine heroism, this great apostle speaks of his death, and breathes in the name of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, both living and dying? Could ever any of the sons of honour, the heroes of this world, the greatest amongst them, display the active hero in the field of blood, or the passive one in the bed of honour, in a manner similar to this, or indeed any thing like it? Rom. viii. 31, 39. xiv. 8. 2 Cor. ii. 14. Phil. i. 21, 22. Acts xx. 24. xxi. 13.

Thus the apostle Paul dies a martyr for Christ and Christianity at Rome, about sixty-six years or so after the birth of Christ, and perhaps nigh thirty-three years after his resurrection, at least between thirty-two and three years.

C H A P. XVIII.

A Short Supplement to Book VI.

THUS the divine mission and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, with the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God, of the all of Christianity, or the religion of the Son of God, stand gloriously illustrated, and divinely confirmed both by prophecies and miracles, and by the spirit and power of God, all over the four gospels, and also the Acts of the Apostles, and indeed in a manner all over the holy scriptures; for New Testament facts and events answer to Old Testament prophecies and predictions, just as face does to face in water, and fully shew all the world that the whole is, and only can be, of God.

And as the least miracle is an acting above, or contrary to all the fixed and the stated laws of nature, how evident is it that God, who has established these laws, can only act above, or, in the least degree, alter them; and therefore all creature power, whether in man or angel, must be altogether incapable of a real miracle!

Juggling tricks, or seeming miracles, wicked men, under the influence of Satan, may work, as Jannes and Jambres in Egypt. But to give life to the meanest insect, or make a louse (as Moses expresses it in the original Hebrew) they could not; but the very devil acknowledges in their mouth, This is the finger, the hand, the power or work of God only, who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all things therein. *Exod. viii. 18, 19. 2 Tim. iii. 8.*

Something like a serpent, like blood, or a frog, or something resembling these, they could make, or that seemed to be such, and that was all; but to give real life in the least degree, they frankly owned, neither they, nor their master the devil, could do it. This was peculiar to God, the great Sovereign of heaven and earth; and therefore the least real miracle is a divine attestation to the truth of any doctrine; and

and real miracles never were wrought in all the world but by God himself, in confirmation of his own truth. As all mankind must acknowledge, that are not lost to reason, revelation, and indeed all religion.

Thus the great and the very first promise of the Son of God as a Saviour, Gen. iii. 15, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, stands divinely illustrated by facts all over the book of God; insomuch, that, in a manner, every fact or event recorded, whether in the Old or New Testament, gloriously and divinely illustrates, and indeed unanswerably demonstrates to all the world, this grand and leading fact, this glorious and divinely important truth of God, namely, that God is in Christ, reconciling sinners unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; so that God, as in Christ, is love itself, grace and truth itself, to all such of mankind, as, in good earnest, by his grace, come to him in his Son. Which grand promise of eternal life and everlasting salvation, in and by the Son of God, and by him alone, all the believing fathers, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, believed and lived upon, and had a divine life of it. Hab. ii. 4. Heb. xi. at large, vii. 19. x. 1. Col. ii. 17.

Which promise is exemplified all over the New Testament, by the birth, life, and death of Christ, with the all of his sufferings, and following glory. 1 Tim. i. 15. Luke xxiv. 26. 1 John iii. 8.

Noah, before his death, in the name of the Son of God, by the eternal spirit of God, confers the blessing of the promised seed to Shem his second son, and passes by Japhet his eldest son. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan the son of Ham, his youngest son, with the descendants of Ham in general, it would appear, shall be his servant; which was awfully exemplified in the seven nations of Canaan afterwards. God shall enlarge Japhet, and he with his posterity, the Gentile nations of Europe, and some of them in Asia, shall embrace Christ and the gospel, and so dwell in the tents of Shem, whose posterity peopled Asia in general; and Canaan shall be his servant also.

Thus Ham, with his posterity, that peopled part of Asia

and all Africa, were laid under a curse, which stands exemplified to the world to this day, Gen. ix. 25, 27. x. at large; which grand promise was renewed to Abraham, of the seed of Shem, and also to Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. Gen. xii. 3. Heb. ii. 14, 16.

He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He was to be of the tribe of Judah, the family of David, and born at Bethlehem. All of which is fully exemplified of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Gen. xlix. 10. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psa. lxxxix. 3, 4. Micah v. 2. Matt. i. 21, 23. xxiv. 6. Luke ii. 1, 12. Acts ii. 29, 36.

He was to be a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief. The Lord Jehovah was to lay on him, viz. by legal imputation, the iniquities of all his people, all such of mankind as should ever in good earnest come to the Father by him.

He was by one offering, for ever, to perfect all them that are sanctified. Isa. liii. chapter at large. Heb. x. 14.

He was to be sold for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed by one, denied by another, forsaken of all his apostles and disciples. They were to sell his garments, cast lots for his vesture, pierce his side, his hands, and his feet, yet a bone of him was not to be broken. He was to make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, and to be numbered with the transgressors; however, two graves were provided for him, one by Joseph in the garden, and another in Calvary, no doubt, with the malefactors; yet he was to rise again the third day, without seeing corruption, and enter upon his glory. All of which stands divinely illustrated by the facts and events recorded of him in the New Testament, as he that runs may read. Zech. xi. 12, 13. xii. 10. xiii. 7. Psa. xxii. 16. x. 34. xx. 16, x. 11. cix. 8. Isa. liii. 8, 12. Matt. xii. 40. Luke xxiv. 26.

Thus the many miracles, whether they were wrought by Moses in Egypt or in the wilderness, or by Elijah or Elisha in Canaan, or by Christ and his apostles, under the New Testament, and there were, no doubt, many more wrought both by Christ and his apostles than are recorded. John xx. 30, 31. xxi. 25.

Each of these shew the divine truth and certainty of the
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word of God, and the spirit and power of God, so gloriously accompanying the word of his grace, makes every real faint and sincere christian a living witness for God and his Christ, and for the truth of Christianity, to all the world, as well as the apostles and disciples of Christ, who were all witnesses chosen of God on purpose to propagate and establish Christianity in the world, which they did in such a manner, and to such an extent over the world, as they could never have done if it had not been the doing of the Lord, or if the God of love and of all grace and truth had not been in and with them. Lam. iii. 37. Acts v. 38, 39.



B O O K VII.

UPON PAUL'S FOURTEEN BOOKS AND EPISTLES OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT, WITH THE GENERAL EPISTLES
OF JAMES, PETER, JOHN, AND JUDE: A FEW
HINTS UPON THESE, ESPECIALLY THE
ROMANS AND HEBREWS.

DISSERTATION I.

Upon the Romans.

IN the epistle to the Romans, we have the great apostle Paul stating the evidence of Christianity to the believing Romans in this glorious and divine manner, about the sixtieth year of our Lord or so, from Corinth in Greece. He begins this divine epistle thus: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God by God himself, to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" grace and peace from God the Father through the Son: Which gospel of the grace of God, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and eternal life and everlasting salvation only in and by him, was exactly, according to Old Testament prophecies and predictions concerning him. As Gen. iii. 15. Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4. Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7. Jer. xxiii. 6.

And he particularly shews them that this Christ of God was declared to be the Son of God with power, his eternal, only begotten, and well-beloved Son; as also his Son by office, as Mediator and Saviour, by his glorious resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness; that is, by his own power as God, or by the joint act of the Father, Son, and Spirit; which good and Holy Spirit of God is the author of all true gospel holiness in saints, the great agent

agent in regeneration and the new birth, and also in the all of true gospel sanctification. John i. 12, 13. iii. 3, 5, 6, 63.

By which Jesus Christ we have received both grace and our apostleship, for obedience to the faith, or to the obedience of faith, among all nations, for his name; amongst whom ye Romans are also the called of Jesus Christ, by his word and Spirit, into his kingdom and glory; insomuch, that I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that your faith in Christ, among so many false gods, is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request, if the will of God be so, that I might come and see you, and impart some spiritual gift unto you, to the end that you might be established in the faith of Christ; which I desire and delight to preach wherever I can, and am ready (God willing) to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Hab. ii. 4. For I am not ashamed of a crucified Jesus, of the cross of Christ, and no man needs nor ought to be ashamed: But I humbly boast and only glory in Christ and the gospel, and even in his cross, which is the very life, the crown, and glory of all the redeemed of the Lord, of all real saints and sincere Christians whatever, and always was so since the introduction of sin into the world, and the very first intimation of a Saviour; and will be so, not only through time, but to eternity itself. For the Lord Jesus Christ, both as a crucified and an exalted and risen Saviour, is at once an entirely suitable, all-sufficient, and all-perfect Saviour, the glorious medium of intercourse between heaven and earth, the sole and the blessed mean of all actual and saving communion and fellowship between God and man, the great and the living representative both of God and his will to the world, and at once the great and the only ordinance

ordinance of God to men for their salvation. And the gospel, by the very institution and appointment of God himself, by all the authority of God and of his Christ, all the authority of heaven, is the ministration of the spirit of righteousness, of imputed righteousness and implanted grace, with the all of inherent righteousness or true gospel holiness of life, of the life of grace here, and the life of glory for ever and ever hereafter, to any sinner of mankind; insomuch, that Jesus Christ and him crucified is to all intents and purposes whatever, both the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, Jew or Gentile, all over the world, by grace believeth. And the gospel itself, which shews us this great Saviour and his great salvation, which consists in deliverance from sin, and all the effects and consequences of it whatever, and in eternal life and everlasting happiness in and by the Son of God, and by him alone, is the power of God and the wisdom of God, or every way an effectual mean in the hands of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, to the all of this grand, this divine, God-like, and Christ-like salvation. For therein or thereby the righteousness of God, Christ's mediatorial and imputed righteousness, or his doing and dying, his perfectly fulfilling all righteousness for his people; including his holy birth, righteous life, and satisfactory death; the one and only justifying righteousness for any sinner of mankind before and as in the sight of God, and which is always attended and followed with inherent righteousness and the all of true gospel holiness, is revealed, published, and declared all over the everlasting gospel, to the faith and spiritual discernment of all truly penitent, believing, and returning sinners of mankind, that by grace, in good earnest, come to God as in Christ, as love itself, grace and truth itself, to all that thus come to him in his Son, by his spirit, according to his word. John i. 12, 13. iii. 16. xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44, 63. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi. 9, 13. Col. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 9. 14. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Which righteousness of Christ is thus revealed to all saints indeed more and more, or from faith to faith, in the all of the true christian life here, even until this very faith in Christ is turned into a vision

vision and hope in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, into real and actual fruition in the light, life, and world of glory for ever and ever hereafter; as it is written and published all over the divine record, and exemplified by the lives of all real saints and sincere christians whatever. "The just shall live by faith," says the apostle. Hab. ii. 4. Heb. viii. 10. x. 38. xi. 1, 6. Rom. iii. 21, 26, 43. vii. 5. i. 5. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15. Gal. ii. 15, 16. iii. 10, 11.

Thus the apostle unanswerably demonstrates to all the world, that God hath set forth his own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, all over the gospel, as a perfect propitiation and a full atonement for sin, through faith in his blood, and for the remission of sins to the chief of sinners that by grace comes to him in his Son, or believes on him as a Saviour; that God may be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, and that upon believing in him. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 26. John i. 12, 13. Rom. i. 5. Acts xiii. 38, 39. xvi. 31. Heb. vi. 17, 18. "For," says the apostle, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" insomuch, that there is no way of any sinner of mankind being brought nigh unto God, but by the blood of his Son; nor of being made like him, but in regeneration, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which always go together. John i. 12, 13. iii. 3, 5, 6, 63. Eph. ii. 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19. Tit. iii. 4, 7.

Thus the apostle, in this epistle, at the same time unanswerably demonstrates that all the wisdom and philosophy of the world could never lead men to happiness. The law and light of nature could not do it; however, these left men without excuse, for living in sin, and worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator. The law of God, as a covenant of works, with all the works of the law and of the flesh put together, could not do it. It is only the blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel of God and of his Christ, that shows us how to be either holy or happy; and that at once sets before us God's great Saviour and his great salvation. Chaps. i. ii. iii. Infomuch, that

the whole epistle shews all the world, that it is only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the way of the covenant of grace, that any sinner of mankind is, or can be saved, or indeed have the saving enjoyment of God, either in grace here, or in glory hereafter. Rom. i. 5, 6, 7, 16, 17. iii. 21, 27. v. 1, 12, 14, 21. vi. 23. viii. 1, 17, 28, 39.

Thus he unanswerably demonstrates to all men, that there is no righteousness to justify any sinner of mankind before, and as in the sight of God, but that of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, his doing and dying, or his perfectly fulfilling all righteousness for his people, or all such of mankind as ever did, or should in good earnest come to the Father, in and by him. Jer. xxiii. 6. Matt. iii. 15. Rom. li. 8, 10, 19. viii. 1, 33, 34; with which one doctrine of imputed righteousness, or justification before, and as in the sight of God, by the righteousness of Christ alone, the whole of Christianity at once stands or falls: As not only this epistle, but the whole book of God, fully shews all the world, that have either eyes to see or ears to hear, or know any thing of a God or a bible. But as Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, as also David, the man according to God's own heart, were only thus justified before God, by the righteousness of Christ alone, and by nothing in or done by themselves, Rom. iv. 1, 16, and indeed all the Saints and people of God, ever since God's Son was revealed as a Saviour.

So the apostle fully shews, that wherever this righteousness of Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, is graciously imputed by God to any person for his or her justification before, and as in the sight of God, there the grace and the spirit, the love and the life of Christ, are always savingly implanted in that soul, in regeneration, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, insomuch, that, without regeneration, and the new birth, or a new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord, even unto good works, no sinner of mankind ever did, will, or can, see, or enter, into the kingdom of God, either in grace here, or in glory hereafter. John i. 12, 13. iii. 3, 5, 14. vi. 6, 37, 44, 63. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Rom. vi. 14. Eph. ii. 5, 8, 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 17.

Thus

Thus all such of mankind as ever were, are, or shall be justified before God, by the righteousness of his Son, are uniformly and invariably savingly enlightened and enlivened from above, created anew in Christ Jesus the Lord, even unto good works, renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of God, and of his Christ; which image of God, engraven upon all real Saints or sincere Christians, is immediately expressed upon them, from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the divine pattern, the all-perfect and glorious model. Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 15, 19. Eph. iv. 23, 24. v. 1, 2. Phil. ii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 21. 1 John ii. 6. iii. 3.

And thus all such as are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, are also all washed and sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord. The work of grace, begun in regeneration, or the new birth, upon the soul, is carried on by degrees unto perfection at death, in the progressive work of true gospel sanctification. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. 1 Theff. v. 23. Phil. i. 6.

All that have a change of state in justification passed upon their persons, and a real and thorough change of nature, regeneration, and true gospel sanctification, wrought in them, are all also at the same time adopted into the family of God, through Christ, and stand intitled before God to all the royal prerogatives, and the rich and distinguishing privileges of the sons and children of God. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 4, 7. 1 John iii. 1, 3.

Thus every believing Roman was justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and washed and sanctified by his word and spirit, and so an heir of God, through Christ. Being made a new man in Christ, having a new heart given to him, and a right spirit put within him, and these attended and followed with a new life in the Son of God, which is the common bliss and happiness of all real Saints and sincere Christians whatever, and each of them come to the years of knowledge, discretion, always was, is, and will be, to the end of time, a living witness for God and his Christ in the world, Rom. viii. and xii. chapters at large, which is all divine light

and evidence, yea, demonstration itself, for Christ, and the all of Christianity.

DISSERTATION II.

Upon Paul's other Epistles in general.

THUS the whole New Testament shews us and all the world, that it is only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the way of the covenant of grace, or of the pure love, rich grace, and tender mercy of God as in Christ, that any sinner of mankind ever was, is, or can be saved. John iii. 16. xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44. Acts iv. 12, 13, 38, 39. xv. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Eph. ii. 5, 8, 20, 22. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18. Heb. viii. 10, 11. Luke i. 72, 75.

And this grand and leading Bible Principle, this truly divine and christian doctrine, which is the sum and substance of the whole gospel, the great apostle Paul fully illustrates, and unanswerably demonstrates, in a manner, all over his fourteen books and epistles of the New Testament; all of which he wrote in the name and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, and with all his authority, as a chosen instrument in the hands of a once crucified, but now an enthroned Redeemer, through the Holy Ghost, already so visibly come down amongst us. Acts ix. 15, 22. xiv. 15, 26. xv. 18. Rom. i. 1, 5. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. 2 Pet. i. 21. Gal. vi. 16.

Accordingly, as a creature, as any creature ever God made, owes its very being, and all its bliss as such, to the pure grace and boundless goodness of Almighty God, as its great Creator, constant Preserver, and gracious Benefactor; so the apostle fully shews all the world, that all real Saints and sincere Christians whatever, as they owe their all as God's creatures, as reasonable beings, to the distinguishing grace and goodness, or free favour of God, as the great Sovereign, sole Proprietor, and supreme Ruler and Governor of the universe, so as Saints or Christians, they all owe their very being and existence, with indeed the all of their life and happiness

happinefs, their peculiar blifs, whether in grace here, or in glory hereafter, to the pure love, tender mercy, and rich and free grace of God as in Chrift. Rom. i. 5, 6, 7, 16, 17. iii. 21, 26. v. 1, 2, 8, 9, 10. viii. 17. Eph. ii. 5, 8. i. 7. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. John iii. 16. 1 John 4, 10.

And hence this apoftle propofes himfelf as a living example of this very thing, both to the church and to the world, to the end of time. As when, he fays, it is by the grace of God that I AM WHAT I AM. I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me. And I obtained mercy for this caufe, that in me firft, Jefus Chrift might fhew forth a long-fuffering for a pattern to them, which fhould hereafter believe on him to life everlafting; who am the chief of finners, and the leaft of faints, and, therefore, brethren, I count not myfelf to have apprehended, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, that for which alfo I am apprehended, firft apprehended of Chrift Jefus. 1 Cor xv. 8, 9, 10. Phil. iii. 8, 14. 1 Tim. i. 12, 16. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

And, therefore, any man living muft know little of God or a bible, of Chrift and his grace and gofpel, or indeed of himfelf, that fo much as once imagines, he can do all of himfelf, whether as a man or a Chriftian, when, and as he pleafes. Rom. vii. 18. viii. 7, 9. 1 Cor. ii. 14. xii. 3. Gal. ii. 15, 16. iii. 10, 11. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 12, 13. iv. 13.

Thus this great apoftle unanfwerably demonftrates to all the world, that God is in Chrift, reconciling finners unto himfelf, not imputing their trespaffes unto them, that God, as in Chrift, is love itfelf, grace and truth itfelf to all that come to him in his Son, Jew or Gentile, or of whatever nation under heaven; and that, in order to this, any finner of mankind muft be favingly enlightened, and graciously enlivened from above, and actually created anew in Chrift Jefus the Lord, even unto good works, and fo made a new creature, and endowed with new powers and abilities, and taught of God by his word, grace, and fpirit, to lead a new life in Chrift. For, fays the Son of God himfelf, verily, verily, I fay unto thee, Except a man, any man, be born again, he can-

cannot see the kingdom of God. And he repeats the double asseveration a second time: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man, any man, be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," viz. either of grace here, or glory hereafter. John iii. 3, 5. And he assures all mankind sinners also, once and again, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke xiii. 3, 5.

For, says he, it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. Human nature, as corrupted and depraved, cannot avail to this. "The words that I speak unto you, whenever accompanied with the grace and the spirit of God and of his Christ, they are spirit and they are life. For no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John vi. 44, 63. And says the apostle Paul, "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. For we are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus the Lord, even unto good works; which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." 2 Cor. iii. 5. v. 17, 18, 19, 20. Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19. ii. 5, 8, 10. Rom. viii. 7, 9. 1 Cor. ii. 14. xii. 3. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Phil. ii. 12, 13. iv. 13.

Thus the apostle shows all men, that the world by wisdom, their own wisdom, ever since sin entered into it, never knew God. 1 Cor. i. 21. So that the Lord Jesus Christ is, by the divine appointment, all the authority of heaven, both the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation; an every way compleat, all-sufficient, and all-perfect Saviour, to all such of mankind as by grace believe on and obey him. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, 30. Rom. i. 16, 17. Col. ii. 9, 10. Heb. vii. 25. Acts xiii. 38, 39. xvi. 31. John viii. 36.

Thus the word of God, in the hand of the spirit of God, is every way sufficient to answer all the grand ends and glorious purposes of it. The law to convince of sin, and shew the necessity of a Saviour; the gospel, as the ministration of the spirit, by faith to lead to Christ, and unite the soul to him; insomuch, that it turned many from dead idols to serve the

the one only living and true God. And no man can know and believe in Jesus Christ as a Saviour, but he will, yea, must love and obey him. No man can receive the word as God's word, that is, with his whole heart and soul, accompanied with the power of his grace and spirit, but it enlightens his head in the knowledge of God and of his Christ, and of the truth as in Jesus; it renews the soul, sanctifies the heart, purifies the affections, and reforms and amends the life, and teaches to lead a new life in Christ Jesus the Lord. Heb. iv. 12. 1 Theff. i. 5. ii. 13. John xiv. 15. xv. 14. vi. 63. Gal. iii. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 7. xi. 17, 18. 1 Pet. i. 8.

Thus the amazing success and the universal spread of the gospel of Christ in the apostolic age, in the course of a few years, by the power of the word, grace, and spirit of God and of his Christ, over a great part of the world, and the establishment of Christianity upon the ruins of all the religions then in the world, Jewish and heathen, Pagan and idolatrous; with the continuance of it ever since, in the face of all opposition, whether from sin or satan, earth or hell, men or devils; while the four grand monarchies and flourishing empires, with other great kingdoms, were long since laid in ruins, buried in oblivion, and now are no more. All these circumstances, with the purity and power of the word of God, so abundantly confirmed both by prophecies and miracles, proclaim aloud to all the world the glorious truth and certainty of the word of God. Matt. v. 18. xvi. 16, 18. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45. vii. 9, 13, 14. Psal. xxii. 30. lxxii. 5, 16, 17. lxxxix. 3, 4, 29. Acts xiii. 41. Hab. i. 5.

DISSERTATION III.

Upon the general Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude.

IN all the other books and epistles of the New Testament, the word of God in general stands clothed with the same divine light and evidence as those of the apostle Paul.
“ Being

“ Being born again,” says the apostle Peter, “ not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. And we have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. For the prophecy of scripture came not in old time, or at any time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. i. 16, 21. The apostle James tells us, “ There is one Law-giver, viz. the Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to save and to destroy: Who art thou that judgest another? The wisdom that is from above, or that is taught by this one Law-giver all over the book of God by his word and spirit, is first pure or holy, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, contradiction, or wrangling; without hypocrisy or dissembling, either with God or men.” John i. 18. Jam. iv. 12. iii. 17, 18. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

The apostle John, and beloved disciple of Christ, also tells us, “ God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is love; God, as in Christ, is love to all that come to him in his Son. And love is of God, and every one that loveth, or any man that knows and believes God’s love as in Christ, is born of God by his word and spirit. He that loveth not, or is as yet destitute of this love of God as in Christ, be he who or what he will of all mankind, and know what he will, knoweth not God; for this great and good reason, indeed unanswerable by all the world, God is love, God as in Christ is love itself, grace and truth itself, rich in grace and abundant in mercy to all that come to and sincerely seek him in his Son. For in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another,

another, from the love of God and of his Christ, shed abroad in our hearts, and reigning in our souls, by the Holy Ghost, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us, already reigns in our hearts and souls, over our lips and lives, and will, at death, reign absolutely, perfectly, and without controul in and over us to eternal ages. We, the apostles and first Christians, have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; that whosoever believeth on him as such, might not perish, but have everlasting life, yea, whosoever of mankind shall in good earnest confess with his mouth, and believe in his heart, and with his whole heart, in and on the Lord Jesus Christ, as thus a Saviour, God dwelleth in him as in his temple, and he in God, in God as in Christ, as the rock of ages; and we know this by his word, grace, and spirit dwelling in us; yea, we have known and believed the love that God hath to us; God is love; God, as thus in Christ, is love; and he that dwelleth in love, as knowing and believing it in his heart, dwelleth in God, and God in him. We all love him, because he first loved us; we love all Saints with a pure heart fervently, and also breathe affection, love, and good-will towards all mankind, because we love Jesus Christ, and God, as in him, with all our hearts and souls; yea, in one word, that which was from the beginning, from the introduction of sin into the world, and the very first intimation of a Saviour, Gen. iii. 15, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, the word of God, the word of Christ, and eternal life, and happiness or everlasting salvation only in and by him, for us or any sinner of mankind. For this life, the all of this eternal life and everlasting salvation or happiness, as only laid in Jesus Christ, and so gloriously published all over the everlasting gospel, was manifested, always declared, published, and proclaimed to, and also known and believed by all the believing fathers from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, or by all Saints whatever.

But now, what first by the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ here in the flesh, and then by his word and spirit in his apostles, and first gospel ministers, made fully

known to us, and to the world, or set as in broad day-light, made clear to us in a manner as the sun in the heavens, in all his meridian splendor, and even to the world. And we have seen it, and all jointly bear witness, and shew unto you Christians, and even to the world of mankind, that eternal life, which was thus with the Father in the Son, and thus manifested unto us all over the divine record. That which we have seen and heard, thus both seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Thus the apostle John, the most amiable of all the apostles of Christ, (however Paul was the greatest) breathes the love and life, the word, grace, and spirit of Christ, his divine Lord and Saviour, his dear master. 1 John iv. 7, 21. i. 1, 7. v. 7, 12. John iii. 16.

Jude, another apostle of Christ, and brother to James, also an apostle, Luke vi. 16, wishes mercy, and peace, and love, to be multiplied more and more to those Christians in the dispersion over the world, to whom he writes, God's love, and grace, and mercy, and also peace with God, through Christ, and calls upon them in the name and bowels, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, to hold fast and contend earnestly for the faith, the true faith of Christ, which was once or already delivered to the Saints, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, endeavouring daily through grace, to keep themselves in the love of God, praying in the Holy Ghost, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and doing all in his name by his word, spirit, and power. For he who is now our constant inspector, will soon be our awful and impartial judge. Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude i. 3, 17, 25. Col. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 9. Gal. vi. 16, all of which books and epistles also shew the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God.

DISSERTATION IV.

Upon the Hebrews.

THUS the great apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, which is, in a manner, as necessary to the church of God as the very sun in the heavens is unto the world, in a truly glorious and divine manner indeed, that is in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, describes both the person and priesthood of Christ; as to his person, he is both God and man in one person; as God, he is the very brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, his eternal, only-begotten, and well-beloved Son; as Mediator and Saviour, his Son also by office, as at once the great and living representative both of God and his will to the world; yea, the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation; and that he who is thus both God and man in one person at first made the worlds, spoke, and the world arose, the mighty, the stupendous fabric of the universe, stood forth in all its beauty and perfection; as also every moment upholds, rules, and governs, and will, at last, judge the world in righteousness, and render to every man according to his works. Which is all demonstration itself to all the world, that he is really and truly God, God equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, or, as the apostle here styles him in God's own language, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; for otherwise, it must be impossible for either men or angels to say how he can be God at all in the proper sense of the word, or how a creature of the first rank and dignity, however some may please to ascribe to him any thing but an absolute equality with the Father, others may say he had no existence until conceived and born of the virgin, if he was only made, as the very and eternal Son of God, made all other creatures, can be God, without necessary and self-existence, self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency, and every divine attribute and perfection whatever? However, thus made,

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must he not be all-creature still? And at best and most, a made God, and so no God, or only a God in a relative sense, and not at all essentially, as things or magistrates are called Gods, who all die like men. And how shall ever so many such Gods make a world, or uphold, rule, and govern it, or redeem a soul of mankind? John i. 1, 5, 14. iii. 16. Col. i. 15, 17, 19. ii. 9, 10. Exod. iii. 14. Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7. Heb. i. 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13. 1 John v. 20. Gal. iv. 4, 7. Acts xvii. 31.

But as this glorious and divine personage, the Lord Jesus Christ, is both God and man in one person; for he took not on him the nature of angel or angels, but the seed of Abraham. And a body hast thou prepared me, says he himself. The word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Heb. ii. 16. x. 5. Matt. xxvi. 38. Mark xiv. 34. John i. 14. iii. 16. 1 John v. 20.

So he is the one and only mediator between God and man, as thus both God and man in one person, Emmanuel, God with us, the one and only law-giver in his church, and a perfect law-giver, and the sole Lord of the consciences of all men; having all the fulness of the God-head dwelling in him bodily, with all gifts and graces necessary for himself, as the head, the living and life-giving head of the whole new creation, and for the whole church of God, whether militant upon earth, or triumphant in heaven, and also head over all things to his church; being possessed of all power and authority, might and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth. John i. 1, 5, 14, 18. 1 Tim. i. 15. ii. 5. iii. 16. Jas. iv. 12. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Matt. xxiii. 8, 9, 12, 28. xviii. 20. Eph. i. 20, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10.

Thus the apostle Paul begins this grand and divine epistle in this manner, 'God who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers, by the prophets,' as the whole Old Testament fully shews, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, as the whole New Testament unanswerably demonstrates to all the world his eternal, only-begotten, and well-beloved Son; his Son also by
office

office, as Mediator and Saviour; the Son of his love and bosom, whom he hath appointed, as thus, both his Son and servant, and sole Saviour of sinners; the heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; by the joint act of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as God, expressed in the person of the Son. John i. 1, 5, 10, 30. 1 John v. 7. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10. Phil. v. 11. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. And being made perfect, or having finished his work as a suffering Saviour, (for he was always perfect in himself, and holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners) the holy One of God, say the very devils in the days of his flesh, became the Author, the declared Author of eternal life and everlasting salvation unto all them that obey him, by grace believe on and obey him. And now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: For by one offering, viz. of himself, he hath for ever, or to all intents and purposes, perfected all them that are sanctified, justified by the blood and righteousness, and so sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord Jesus; who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God; offered his whole human nature, soul and body, with the all of his obedience and sufferings, upon the golden altar of his divine nature, as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling favour, a compleat satisfaction, an all-perfect atonement or propitiation for the sins of all his people, or all such of mankind as come to him in his Son: In which he was priest, altar, and sacrifice, all in one; a new thing in the earth or whole universe of God. And which he that was both God and man in one person could ever possibly effect, even in the least degree: Which eternally and for ever decides, by all the authority of heaven, in several long but little controversies indeed, whatever noise they have made in the world:

world: As if the Lord Jesus Christ, who is thus evidently both God and man in one person, John i. 1, 3, 14. iii. 16. Heb. i. 1, 2, 8. ii. 10. iv. 14, 16. vii. 25. ix. 14, 26. x. 14. Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxi. 22, was not the true God, God equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and so eternal life to all in real union and of one spirit with him, in direct opposition to all that God has either said or done by his Son. 1 John v. 7, 20. 1 Cor. vi. 17. John i. 1, 3, 14. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10. As if he had no existence until conceived of the virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, or the Highest overshadowing her. Matt. i. 20, 21. Luke i. 35. As if, when he appeared in his own world, in the amiable and divine character of the great and the sole Saviour of sinners, he only came to teach and instruct them, and set them an example of the sublimest virtue, or highest moral excellence, and that mankind sinners stood in no more need of him as a Saviour; whereas, at the same time, that he has taught the world all true wisdom by his word and spirit, as the whole book of God fully shows. For who else could ever do it, but the Christ of God, the wisdom and the power of God alone unto salvation, or to all intents and purposes, to every one that believeth? He has also set an all-perfect example of holiness and obedience to his Father's will, for the imitation of all mankind in every thing imitable. So he came expressly to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to wash all his people from their sins, even in his own blood; to destroy all the works of the devil, fulfil all righteousness, and make a full and a final purchase of all life and happiness for all such of mankind as ever did or should in good earnest come to God the Father in and by him. John xiv. 6. vi. 37. iii. 16. i. 29, 36. Heb. ix. 26. 1 John iii. 8. i. 7. Rev. i. 5, 6. Eph. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Matt. iii. 15. Heb. x. 5, 9, 10, 14. Gal. iv. 4, 7. 1 Cor. i. 21, 23, 24. Col. ii. 3. James iv. 12.

As for any of mankind, from the terms all and whole, or every man, where the word and Spirit of God always fixes the precise sense and full meaning, as the apostle in this epistle unanswerably shows all the world, to infer the doctrine of universal redemption; or that Christ satisfied the law and justice

justice of God for the sins of all men, for all the sins of all mankind. For if their doctrine had either sense or meaning in it at all, it must signify so much. For the blood and righteousness of Christ is the sole propitiation, the one and only atonement for the least sin of any of mankind sinners in all the universe of God, as the whole word of God fully shews us and all the world. Heb. ix. 22. 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 9, 10. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Heb. ii. 10. v. 9, 10, 14.

And, therefore, as one sin naturally leads on to another, and one absurdity allowed serves to introduce another, as all must grant; so they, taking for granted what was never given, that Christ died for all men, and so hath put all men into what they call a salvable state, they next suppose that all mankind have grace, as sons of Adam, and as under the law, as a covenant of works, to repent, believe, and obey Christ and the gospel; or, in other words, are able to make themselves Christians when and as they please.

Whereas the all of the divine record, law or gospel, assures us and all the world, that in that way, or by the works of the law, or by our own will or works, our own righteousness, or any thing in or done by us, there neither is nor can be grace or life, justification and salvation, or happiness for any sinner of mankind. Gal. ii. 15, 16. iii. 2, 10, 11. Yea, in this way, salvation or happiness would be impossible for all mankind sinners. Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12. Matt. xix. 17. And therefore the words all, whole, and every man, signifies all and every one; or wholly all such of mankind, of whatever nation, tongue, or kindred, as have, do, or shall come to God in his Son. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. 1 John ii. 2. Heb. ii. 9, 10. v. 9, 10, 14. Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45.

Thus the whole blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel assures all the world, that any sinner of mankind ever was, is, or only can be, saved by grace; special, supernatural, and saving grace, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; and that in the way of the covenant of grace, and not of works. John iii. 16. Eph. ii. 5, 8. John xiv. 6. vi. 37,

44, 63. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 27. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. ii. 14. Heb. ii. 14. viii. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 12, 13. iv. 13.

Thus the apostle, in this epistle, besides these great and divine matters, divinely and unanswerably demonstrates the glory of Christ above all the holy angels, above Moses and all created beings, as also of the Christian above the Mosaical dispensation; insomuch, that Moses and the law in all their glory, was just Christ and the gospel in miniature type and figure, and only a shadow of good things to come; but the body was of Christ. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope, by Christ and the gospel, did; by which we draw nigh unto God, says the apostle. Christ's satisfaction, as the great New Testament High-priest, he fully shows in this epistle, is all-perfect; his intercession is all-powerful and ever prevalent: In one word, he is at once the sum and substance, the very life and glory, not to say of Moses and the law, or the whole Mosaical dispensation only, but of the whole blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel. Heb. i. chap. at large. vii. 19. x. 1, 14. ix. 24. iii. 5, 6. Col. ii. 17. Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 11.



B O O K VIII.

UPON THE REVELATION.

DISSERTATION I.

*Upon the Introduction, and the seven Churches of Asia—Chaps.
i. ii. iii.*

IN the book of Revelation, the apostle John, and beloved disciple of Christ, who was called young, to be an apostle, and who lived to old age and grey hairs, lived to see the canon of holy scripture completed in general, as well as this book of Revelation or prophecy in particular. And he lays any man under the curse of God that shall either add to or diminish from it, Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

He outlived the first century, or hundred years, from the birth of Christ, and it would appear as he was either banished by Domitian, some say after he was boiled in a cauldron of oil, from which he received no harm, or fled into the isle of Patmos, one of the Cyclades in the Ægean sea, west of the lesser Asia, from the violent persecution raised by him against the Christians all over the Roman empire; so it is likely he died a martyr for the love and sake of Jesus, under the persecution by Trajan, another Roman emperor, about the year of Christ one hundred and nine; and sealed the all of the doctrine and character of Christ with his blood, as Christ long before told both him and his brother James they should do. Matt. xx. 22, 23. Mark x. 38, 39. Acts xii. 2.

Being thus then in this isle of Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, Rev. i. 9, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him from heaven as God, and in his own likeness as man, whom he so long and so well knew both in his life and after his resurrection, for the space of

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forty

forty days. He appeared to him as God, as God, Man, Mediator, and Saviour, but only in the likeness or appearance of his body or humanity, which was already set down at the right-hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and will remain there until he comes again in all his glory at the last day. Heb. i. 3, 9, 28. Psa. cx. 1. Rev. i. 7. I say, he appeared to him as God, and in the amiable and divine character of Mediator and Saviour, as both God and Man in one person, but not in his real body now glorified in heaven, but in the likeness or seeming resemblance of it; and as in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, or seven churches of Christ in the lesser Asia, east of, and opposite to, the isle of Patmos, where John now was, which, in this vision, are represented by these candlesticks, and as holding the seven stars or ministers of these churches in his right-hand, as the special objects of his love and care; for it does not appear that either before his incarnation, or after his ascension, he ever did, or will appear, in his real body to any, until he comes as Lord Judge of the world in all his glory at the last day. Heb. ix. 28. Acts i. 11. Dan. vii. 13.

The time when the Lord Jesus Christ thus appeared to John, was on the Christian Sabbath, or Lord's day, the first day of the week, from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the world, Rev. i. 10. God the Father gave, or it was the joint act of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as God, to give the all of this divine revelation to Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour. Col. i. 19. ii. 3, 9, 10. i. 15, 16, 17, 18. Eph. i. 19, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. James iv. 12.

Thus the whole is emphatically stiled in God's own language, the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. The great subject matter of this revelation of Jesus Christ is, the grand lines both of the church and world, and especially of the church of God, from the birth of Christ to the end of time. Write, says the Son of God, to John, the things which thou hast seen, the things which are, now are, and the things which shall be hereafter. Rev. i. 2, 19.

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These grand events were known only unto God, before whom all things, from eternity before time, through time, and to eternity, when time shall be no more, are ever naked and open in one continued view. Acts xv. 18. Psa. cxxxix. 6. cxlvii. 5. 2 Pet. iii. 8.

Thus these great things of God and of his Christ, with all the grand and the leading lines both of the church and world, to the end of time, so far as they regarded futurity, were, and only could be, known unto God, who is perfect in knowledge, and infinite in understanding. Job xi. 7. Psa. cxlvii. 5.

And hence the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man in one person, and in whom, as Mediator and Saviour, are hid all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge whatever, John i. 14. Col. i. 19. ii. 3, 9, 10, could only be found either in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, to open the book, or so much as look thereon, the book of Divine Revelation in general. And this book of prophecy, both as to the church and world in particular, to the end of time. Neither man, angel, nor devil, could do the least thing at it. They know nothing of futurity further than God has revealed it to them; it is peculiar to Deity to know it. Rev. v. 1, 5. John i. 18. 2 Pet. i. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Isa. xlix. 9, 10. Gen. xviii. 25. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Eccl. iii. 14. vi. 12. vii. 14. Psa. cvi. 2. cxxxix. 6. cxlv. 17. cxlvii. 5.

And thus the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God as well as man, yea, both God and man in one person, could only open the book of God's decrees, or the least part of his eternal purpose, as to any person or thing all over the universe; which he has already done both by the works of creation and Providence. For it is a maxim of unerring wisdom and eternal truth, that none that acknowledge a God and a bible, can refuse that all things were made by him, and without him there was nothing made that was made, as also that by him all things still subsist, yea, that all things were made for him, as well as by him; and so he ruleth by his power for ever, whether in the armies of heaven, or amongst the inhabitants of the earth. John i. 1, 3. Col. i. 15, 17. Psa.

Psa. lxii. 11. lxvi. 7. Dan. iv. 35; and especially by the grand, the glorious, and godlike work of man's redemption, and the all of Divine Revelation; which was all the proper, the pure, and peculiar work of God. The least part of which, neither man nor angel, nor the highest creature ever God made, was so much as capable of.

Thus the very and eternal Son of God himself confesses, that as man, or a made creature, he knew not the day of judgment: However, as God, he knew all things perfectly, and was one with the Father. Matt. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32. John x. 30. i. 18.

And he also tells us, that no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Matt. xi. 27. Luke x. 22. And therefore the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, could only open this book of Divine Revelation, or so much as look thereon; no mere creature in heaven or earth, or under the earth, could do it in the least degree. Rev. i. 1, 5. i. 5. Psa. ii. 1, 2, 6, 7. xxxiii. 11. cxlviii. 6. Prov. viii. 14, 22, 23, 27, 31. Jer. v. 22. Zeph. ii. 2. Hab. ii. 3.

Accordingly this revelation of Jesus Christ, as God himself expressly stiles it, Rev. i. 1, As it could only be made known by him, whether to men or angels; and as he made it fully known, as far as infinite wisdom and goodness saw meet, to John his beloved apostle and disciple, through the Holy Ghost, as this whole book fully shews; and also to Paul in a very glaring manner, 2 Thess. ii. chapter; and likewise to Peter, 2 Pet. ii. chapter. And as it could only be known after it was given either by the church or world, by the word of God, accompanied with the influences and spirit, and by means of a variety of great events in providence, both as to the church of God and the world of mankind. So it is represented, as indeed it was, as a sealed book, a book written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals, as the prophecy of Daniel was long before, or authentic deeds or records were of old, sealed. Rev. i. 5, Dan. ix. 24. xii. 4, 9. vi. 17. Jer. xxxii. 10, 11, 14, 44.

Thus

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, in this vision from heaven, appears to John, not only as an exalted Prince and Saviour, already set down at the Father's right-hand in the excellent glory, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins to all that come to God by him. Acts v. 31. xiii. 38, 39. But also as fully and plainly exhibit all over the everlasting gospel, and by all the ordinances and institutions of his grace, as by his word, sabbaths, and sacraments; with all the means of grace under the gospel, as Emmanuel, God with us; both God in our nature, and God in, with, and amongst all his saints and people upon earth; as at once the glorious medium of intercourse, all-saving intercourse, between heaven and earth; God and man, the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation; as God's one and only way to us as sinners, and our one and only way to God. John. xiv. 6. vi. 37. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," says John, "and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, that is, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, saith the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Almighty God. And what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in the lesser Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

And being turned to see him that thus spake to me with such a voice, such a loud, heavenly, and divine voice, which was the voice of Christ, I saw seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven churches of Christ over in the lesser Asia, and in the midst of these churches of God the Lord Jesus Christ, as both God and man in one person, but not in his real body, already glorified, and at the Father's right-hand in heaven, but only in the likeness or seeming resemblance of it, which John so long and so well knew before, having so often leaned upon his breast at supper, or laid himself as a lamb in his bosom during his personal ministry upon earth, the Lord Jesus Christ, in this prophetic vision, appears to John in his truly amiable and
divine

divine character of Mediator and Saviour, as the great New Testament Prophet and High-priest, and sole King in Zion; as the true tabernacle and temple, the true mercy-seat and throne of grace; yea, in all the glory of his person and priesthood, as the Christ the Son of the living God, the living and life-giving head of his church, the sole head both of influence to and of government in and over her, and head also over all things to his church; and God, as in Christ, thus always in, with, and amongst all his saints and people upon earth, holding all true gospel ministers, and indeed all sincere christians, in his right-hand, as the divine description of Christ's person, office, and character here fully shews all the world. Chap. i. at large.

Thus John, the beloved apostle and disciple of Christ, being now in old age and grey hairs, as it were stooping down to meet the grave, and embrace, whenever it pleased God, the glorious crown of martyrdom for the love and sake of Jesus, but full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and so eminently under the power of the world to come while he lived in this, wrote this book of the Revelation or prophecy of Jesus Christ both as to the church and world, and especially the church of God, to the end of time, in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus; and with all his authority, about the year of our Lord ninety-six; or at least, it would appear, betwixt that and ninety-nine. Rev. i. 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19.

And directs it, with his name at it, as all books of prophecy were directed in the Old Testament, at the will and command of God and of his Christ. Rev. i. 4, 5, 6. Isa. i. 1, 2. Jer. i. 1, 2. Ezek. i. 3. Dan. i. 6, 8, 9, 22, 23, x. 11. Hosea i. 1. Joel i. 1. Mich. i. 1. Hab. i. 1. Zech. i. 1. Mal. i. 1.

He thus directs it to the seven churches of Asia by name, and by them to all the churches of Christ to the end of time, and presents it as the last book in the canon of holy scripture to the world in general, for the instruction of mankind while the sun and moon endure. Rom. xv. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 6, 9, 10. John xx. 31. 1 John v. 13. 2 Pet. i. 16, 21. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Rev. xxii. 18, 19, 20.

And

And in the same name of Christ, and with all the same authority of God and of his Christ, he wishes grace, God's free favour, sovereign love, rich grace and tender mercy as in Christ, and peace with God through Christ; peace of conscience by the peace-speaking blood of Christ, including in it all that bliss and happiness fairs indeed enjoy in and by the Son of God, whether in this life and world, or that which is to come. He wishes both these, or all these, to be multiplied more and more unto them from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, one Lord Jehovah, through the Son Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, by the Holy Ghost, as the sanctifier, comforter, leader, and guide of all the fairs and people of God, by and according to the word of God, through life and death: Yea, this apostolic benediction in John and the other apostles shows, that these are and always were upon all such of mankind as know and believe God's love as in Christ, or are already in real union and of one spirit with the Son of God. Rev. i. 4, 5, 6. Jude, verses 20, 21. Rom. v. 1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 21.

And as all the redeemed of the Lord, in every age and period of the church and world, all such as are thus in Christ and have Christ in them as the hope of glory, are not under the law as a covenant of works; for Christ is thus the end of the law, the moral law, for righteousness to every one that believeth. Rom. x. 4. So they are all under grace, God's grace as in Christ, and also under the law of the ten commandments as a rule of life, as in the hands of Jesus Christ as Mediator, and thus truly and properly under the law to Christ. Rom. vi. 14. iii. 31. iv. 16. xi. 5, 6. 1 Cor. ix. 20. Eph. ii. 5, 8. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 2 Tim. i. 9.

Thus fairs militant upon earth, under a due sense of divine redeeming love, join issue with all fairs already triumphant in heaven, and sing unto him that has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and hath made them kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. i. 5, 6.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ expressly commands John,
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his faithful servant and apostle, to write so and so unto the angel or minister of the church of Ephesus, and so by him to the whole church there, which was the metropolis or chief city of Ionia, and of all the lesser Asia. " Write these things, saith he that holdeth the seven stars, or true gospel ministers in his right-hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, or churches of Christ, who is ever in, with, and amongst all his saints upon earth, I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, as christians, perfectly and altogether; and how thou canst not bear with patience, much less approbation, the service of sin and satan, whose servants are evil indeed, worshippers of false gods. And thou hast tried false apostles, and shewn them to be such, by the word and Spirit of God; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Thou, in my name and for my sake, with diligence, with christian patience and perseverance, through my strength, with my spirit and power, hast performed the duties and endured the trials of the christian life, and still cleaves to me and the cause of Christianity, in direct opposition to all heathen idolatry. Nevertheless, as your best friend, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left, in some measure left, thy first love, that sacred fire of the love of God and of his Christ enkindled in thy heart and soul by the Holy Ghost, which ascended heaven in a constant, a perpetual, and growing flame, and which should have increased daily more and more, is somewhat, if not greatly, abated. Remember, therefore, from whence, from what height of piety, fervour, and devotion, thou art now fallen, and repent, and do the first works: Seek grace of God, for Christ's sake, to repent and return unto God, as in Christ, with redoubled vigour, to live more and more by faith on the Son of God, and to walk and abound in the love of God, and to one another in the Lord, and to all men; as all that profess my name and religion ever ought to do. Matt. xxii. 37, 40. John xiii. 35. xiv. 15. xv. 14. 1 John iii. 14. Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick, thy church, with my word and ordinances, my sabbaths and sacraments, from amongst you,

you, except thou repent, thus repent. But this thou hast; that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, who teach men to have wives and all things common, as they themselves practise; which doctrine and life, as it is directly contrary both to my law and gospel, I also hate. He that hath an ear, or will hear, let him hear and attend seriously to it; seek grace of God in good earnest, for Christ's sake, duly to consider what the Spirit, the good and Holy Spirit of God thus saith unto the churches, all the churches of God upon the earth: For these things are an example to all the living, and even for the instruction of the best of men. Rom. xv. 4. To him that overcometh sin, satan, the world, and the flesh, by Christ in him, by my word, grace, and spirit, and so perfects true gospel holiness in my sight, I will give eternally to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Yea, I am the true tree of life, and because and as I live, he shall live also, both in grace here, and in glory for ever and ever hereafter. Rev. ii. 1, 7. John xix. 19. xvii. 24.

Which should teach us and all the world to seek grace of God, for Christ's sake, in good earnest; to walk humbly, tenderly, and circumspectly with God, in the Son of his love, all the days of our life. For he who is now our constant inspector, and knows our most secret thought afar off, will soon be our awful and impartial Judge. What manner of persons, then, ought we all to seek, through grace, to be, in all holy conversation and true godliness? Hab. ii. 4. 2 Cor. v. 7. xiv. 15. Eph. v. 1, 2. Gen. v. 24. Phil. iii. 8, 11. Heb. xi. 6. Rom. xiv. 23.

And unto the angel or minister of the church in Smyrna, another sea-port of Ionia, and a considerable city, "Write these things, saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive, and who liveth for evermore, I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; but thou art rich, viz. in faith and good works. And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, believing Jews, and are not; but are the very synagogue of satan. Fear, unduly fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer for the love and sake of Jesus: Behold, the devil, wicked men, under the

influence of satan, shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried as silver or gold in a furnace, which only lose their dross by it; and ye shall have tribulation ten days, a short space, and be all spiritual and eternal gainers, by means of all your afflictions and persecutions. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, of eternal life and glory, that awaits all my saints and people beyond death and the grave.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh by Christ in him, or by the assistance of his grace and spirit, shall not be hurt of the second death, shall never die eternally.” Rev. ii. 8, 11. iii. 21. John xi. 25, 26. Rom. viii. 37, 39. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

Which teaches all the world this grand instruction, if we will attend to it, that true faith in Christ, and real union with him, can only enrich the soul, and secure the happiness of any sinner of mankind. And so without these, kings are poor; emperors, or the greatest men in the earth, are beggars, wretched, miserable, and undone creatures. Rev. ii. 9, 10, 11. James ii. 5. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 4, 7. Psal. ix. 17. lxxiii. 29.

And to the angel or minister of the church of Pergamos, a city most likely built where the ancient fort of Troy, so long famous in the world, once stood; or at least not far from it, in the same country: “Write these things, saith he that hath the sharp sword with two edges,” viz. the word of God, which slays impenitent sinners, and condemns every sin, on the one hand; and instructs and edifies, comforts and builds up, all real saints and sincere christians in the faith of Christ, on the other; and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; of the opinions, principles, and practices, or of the lives and conversations of all men; “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where satan’s seat is; where sin and satan, with heathen idolatry, as yet sit enthroned, and reign triumphant, or rage and rule over so many miserable sinners. And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, the true faith of Christ, even in those days, wherein Antipas, most likely minister

minister of Christ there, at least a true disciple of his, was his faithful martyr, sealing the doctrine and character of Christ with his blood, shed by the hands of wicked men under the influence of satan.

“ But I have still a few things against thee, because thou hast still with thee some that teach the doctrine of Balaam, that wicked false prophet, who taught Balak, king of Moab, of old to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, both as to idolatry and fornication, and prevailed. Num. xxv. 18.

“ And thou hast also among you Nicolaitans, who hold wives and all things common, which wicked doctrine and practice I hate.

“ Repent ye, therefore, and believe and obey the gospel, through grace, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth, my word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and body, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart: Which can soon dissect any man, and show what he is. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit of God saith unto the churches, To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, Christ, the bread of life, for ever and ever. And I will give him a white stone, in token of justification before God by the blood and righteousness of Christ alone, and also of that crown of glory that awaits him in heaven. And in that stone a new name, viz. the spirit of adoption, through Christ, by the Spirit, which the person that is blest with it only properly knows.” Rev. ii. 12, 17. Eph. i. 7. Rom. viii. 9, 14. Gal. iv. 4, 7.

And unto the angel or minister of the church in Thyatira, a city of Lydia, “ Write these things, saith the Son of God,” who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, pervading the universe, and penetrating the whole circle of being, and his feet like unto fine brass; who rules indeed by law and love, by his word, grace, and spirit, in and over all his saints and people, and with the same infinite ease also ever over and amidst, and treads down at his pleasure

sure all his and their enemies, " I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. For thou hast more works than faith, love, patience, and real christian obedience. And therefore I have a few things against thee; because as Jezabel, the wife of Ahab, king of Israel, induced him and his people to idolatry (1 Kings xvi. 29, 31); so you have gross heathen idolaters and worshippers of false gods among you in Thyatira. And you have not done all against such abominations you might and ought to have done: But unless you return from idols to serve the one only living and true God, I will punish you, and all that follow such wicked practices, according to your works: Yea, as the righteous Judge of the world, I will at last render unto every man according to his works. And therefore let all men know that I search the reins and the hearts of all. But unto all such in Thyatira as oppose these doctrines and practices of such gross idolaters, I will put upon them none other burden but to hold fast that which they have already, viz. Christ and the gospel, with all their hearts. And for your comfort know, that all such as are found in me at last shall judge the world, that is, approve of their just, however awful judgment: Yea, even in due time, heathen idolatry shall go down, and Christianity be the religion of the Roman empire, now heathens, and in a manner of the world. Every man in Christ is enlightened and enlivened by him, as the morning star, even here, and will be much more so in the light and life of glory hereafter." He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Rev. ii. 18, 28. And unto the angel or gospel minister of the church in Sardis, and by him unto the whole church, " Write these things, saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, that is, is anointed with the Holy Ghost above all measure, as Mediator and Saviour, and hath the same good and Holy Spirit with his sevenfold gifts and graces; yea, all his supernatural gifts and graces, to bestow upon his people; and he that hath the seven stars, or ministers of the seven churches, ever in his right-hand. Sardis was the chief city in all Lydia, where Cræsus reigned until conquered by

Cyrus,

Cyrus; who, it is said, restored him to his kingdom again, after he had conquered Babylon with Lydia.

I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead. Thou hast a flaming profession of my name and religion, but little of the light, love, and life of Christ in you; little genuine piety, heart holiness, warm devotion, godly conversation. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; that without union with Christ, and new supplies of grace, would die; for I have not found thy works perfect, that is, sincere and upright before God, as they should have been. For by every purpose, or word of God, duty is always man's, as grace and events are always God's. Micah vi. 8.

Remember, therefore, how thou hast received God's grace as in Christ, and heard the gospel, and hold fast, cleave with full purpose of heart and soul to Christ and the gospel, through grace, and repent, return unto God, and lead a new life in Christ.

If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, and sincerely endeavour thus to obey Christ and the gospel, and so shew all the world thou never yet hadst the real grace of God as in Christ, I will come upon thee with judgments, as the thief comes suddenly and unexpectedly upon a house to break it by night.

Nevertheless thou hast a few names even in Sardis; some Saints, indeed, burning and shining lights, burning with holy and well-tempered zeal, and shining with true gospel holiness, who have not defiled their garments with the works of the flesh, and the pollutions of heathen idolatry. And they shall walk with me in white, clear as the sun, before God, by imputed righteousness, and fair as the moon by implanted grace, by inherent holiness; for they are worthy, excellent ones indeed.

He that by grace overcometh, shall ever be thus arrayed, and stand in the book of life; and I will openly acknowledge him as mine before God, angels and men, and acquit him in judgment, as the Lord Judge of the world at the last day. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches, Rev. iii. 1, 6.

And

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, another city of the lesser Asia, which name signifies brotherly love, and not Philadelphia in Egypt; it was situate upon the borders of Mysia and Lydia, Write these things, saith he, that is holy, essentially holy; he that is true, eternal truth itself; he that hath the key of David, who is the true David, and hath all power and authority, rule and government, in and over his own church, and also over the whole world; who openeth and none can shut, who shutteth and none can open. I know thy works and approve of them. I have set before thee an open door of salvation, by Christ and the gospel, and none can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name, nor dishonoured my religion.

Behold I will make the obstinate and unbelieving Jews, as well as the idolatrous Heathens, who, whatever they pretend otherwise, are still of the synagogue of Satan, reverence and respect you. And know that I have loved you, and that God in very deed is among you.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience and forbearance, and in true Christian and Divine patience, by faith in and love to me, hast possessed thy soul, I also will keep thee by my almighty power and providence, by my word, grace, and spirit, in and from the hour of temptation and trial, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, the truth as in Jesus, and that alone, that no man take thy crown from thee, no person, no thing, John xvi. 22.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar, a fixt pillar in the temple of my God; he shall not be removed, but shall have eternally engraven upon him the name of my God, and of the holy city Jerusalem above, being for ever in heaven a perfect man in Christ, perfect in the life and image of God and of his Christ, perfect in love and in praise.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit of God saith unto the churches, Rev. iii. 7, 13.

This church, where the love of God and of his Christ, and truly christian and brotherly love abounded, it would appear,

as the very name Philadelphia, or love of the brotherhood imports, was the only one of the seven churches that is not loudly rebuked and threatened; which teaches us, and all the world, that gospel sincerity, and the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and reigning in the soul by the Holy Ghost, and as an effect of love to Christ, love to Saints, all Saints, with a pure heart fervently, and also good will to mankind, is a great thing with God, and always pleasing in his sight, through Christ. Num. xxiii. 21. 1 Chron. xxix. 17. Psa. xxxii. 2. li. 17. Matt. xxii. 37, 40. Rom. xiii. 10. Gal. v. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 4. ii, 5, 9.

And unto the angel or minister of the church in Laodicea, another city in the lesser Asia, Write these things, saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God, that is the Lord Jesus Christ. I know thy works, he condemns every thing blamable in them, and does not mention one thing to their commendation. However, she was still a golden candlestick, or a true church of God, that had the word and sacraments of Christ, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, with the other external ordinances and institutions of his grace. And that thou art neither cold nor hot, but in a middle temper, frame, or state, betwixt them. I would thou wert either cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, in a most unhopeful situation, unless you fly with speed to God's mercy in Christ, I will spew thee out of my mouth as an abominable thing, or throw thee aside as a withered branch, only fit for the fire of God's wrath.

Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods in this world, and have such abundance of all the external ordinances and means of grace also, that I think I have need of nothing more or further; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked with all these, as yet before God. I counsel thee, as the great Redeemer and lover of souls, to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; that is, fly, as for your life, and your eternal all, to the blood and righteousness of Christ, for justification before God, to his word, grace, and spirit, for regeneration and sanctification,

sanctification, receive a whole Christ, with your whole hearts, and as the unspeakable gift of God; and so eternal life and everlasting salvation, as the gift of God through him, with adoption into the family of God, as an act of pure grace in God, for Christ's sake; and by the same grace of God as in Christ, seek daily to improve the Son of God as a Saviour, for all the purposes of life and salvation.

Thus, buy of me, without money and without price, as all mankind sinners otherwise have not the least price to purchase my least favour, not so much as to recommend, much less entitle them to the least act of God's sovereign grace, even as in Christ.

And so ye shall be rich indeed, and cloathed upon before God, with the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, and adorned inwardly with implanted grace, and all the beauties of inherent holiness, and thus heirs of God, and of glory through Christ.

And so the shame of thy nakedness shall never appear to thy condemnation before God. And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see; being thus in real union, and of one spirit with the Son of God, thou shalt see clearly with the two eyes of faith, and of spiritual understanding, and divine discernment. Isa. lv. 1, 7. Matt. xi. 28, 30. John i. 12, 13. viii. 36. Acts xiii. 38, 39. xv. 11. Eph. ii. 5, 8. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. Rev. xxii. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 4, 9, 15. Rom. vi. 23. viii. 9, 14, 17. Gal. iv. 7.

As many as I love and delight in, I rebuke and chasten, whenever necessary. Be zealous, therefore, and repent; seek grace to do this soon, and with speed. Behold, I stand at the door of your hearts, in all the ordinances of the gospel, and knock for entrance and admission into your hearts and souls, by my word and ordinances, my grace and spirit. If any man whatever hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

If any man, through grace, in good earnest, comes to the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit, he will be ever graciously accepted of him, and have saving fellowship with the Father, and

and with his Son Jesus Christ. John xiv. 6. vi. 37. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi. 9, 13. Eph. i. 6, 7. To him that overcometh by Christ in him, what or whosoever he be, will I grant, or freely give with respect to him, to sit with me on my throne, viz. of glory in heaven, even as I already overcame, as a Prince and a Saviour, and am set down with my Father on his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit of God saith unto the churches, (Rev. iii. 14, 22) which is all big with divine instruction, not only to the then seven churches of Asia, but to all the churches of Christ, and indeed to the world of mankind to the end of time. And which is all also divine demonstration itself, both to the divine mission and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour; and likewise to the infallible truth and certainty, and the vast importance and excellency, of the all of Christianity to all the world. Rom xv. 4. Col. vi. 16.

DISSERTATION II.

Upon John's second grand Vision, and the great Lines both of the Church and world, with the great Events of Providence opened up therein.—Chaps. iv. v. vi. vii.

IN the fourth chapter, after John, by a heavenly vision in the former part of this Revelation, had seen Jesus Christ in the glory of his person and priesthood, and indeed of his whole office and character, as Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, as amidst the seven golden candlesticks, that is, the seven churches of Asia already mentioned, and as holding the seven stars or ministers of these churches in his right-hand; and also having both received a full and ample commission from him, as invested with all this glory and majesty, and fully and faithfully executed that commission to all these churches in his name, by his word, spirit, and power, he here is favoured with another heavenly and divine vision. “After this,” says John, “I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven, (the highest and third

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heaven

heaven it would appear) and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit, filled with his sacred and divine influences, and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne of majesty and mercy, of justice and righteousness, of grace and truth, of holiness and glory in heaven," viz. God, as in Christ, enthroned in and encircled with all the glories of heaven; surrounded with all the numerous hosts of angels and of saints in the excellent glory, arrayed with all the glory and lustre of the Godhead; which infinitely surpasses all created thought or conception, language or description: Or he thus sees the humanity of Christ in one person with his divinity; in glory, it is likely; of which perhaps the jasper, however transparent with a variety of vivid colours; the sardine, however red and blooming, was only a faint figure: For it is certain these figures, or indeed any thing in nature, could but very faintly indeed represent or point out the glorious attributes and perfections of Almighty God, with his justice and holiness, or the glory of the person, natures, and offices, or perfections, character, and priesthood of Christ.

Thus John, by the spirit, sees God, as in Christ, gloriously present in heaven, with all the numerous hosts of saints and angels there; who is essentially present every where, present by his power and providence all over the universe. Jer. xxiii. 24. Psal. cxxxix. 1, 12. Amos ix. 2, 6. 2 Chron. vi. 18. As also graciously present upon earth, in his true church, with all his saints and people, all his true worshippers, as their God in Christ, in covenant; as the God of love, of all grace and truth, seated upon a throne of grace, and abundant in mercy to all that come to him in his Son. Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16. x. 19, 23. xii. 18, 23. Eph. ii. 18, 22. iii. 12.

Thus John, in this glorious vision in the fourth and fifth chapters, sees all the numerous hosts of saints already triumphant in heaven, before the throne of God and of the Lamb, singing unto him that has loved them, and washed them

them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and his Christ; represented, it would appear, by the four-and-twenty elders and seats about the throne: As also all saints as yet militant upon earth, before the same throne of God and of the Lamb, and God, as in Christ, as really and truly graciously present with them and amongst them by his word and ordinances, and all the institutions of his grace under the gospel, as he is gloriously present in heaven with all the numerous hosts of saints and angels there; which is illustrated by the people of Israel of old in the wilderness, in their different encampments, and the Lord Christ always upon their head in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; and also by the four gospels, and the whole New Testament, with all that know and believe the gospel.

As all that knew and believed God's love as in Christ under the Old Testament are already in heaven, (Neh. ix. 7, 14. Heb. xi. 13. Isa. lvii. 2. Rev. iv. chap. at large. xii. 1. xv. 3); and all Old Testament saints and prophets, and also New Testament christians, apostles, and evangelists, already in heaven, stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb, upon the footing of the blood and righteousness of Christ, and they rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

And they, and John, and all christians upon earth, rejoice that Jesus Christ, who had already opened, and who indeed only could open, the book of God's decrees, and also the book of divine revelation in general, would now open by this book of Revelation and prophecy the all of the mind and will of God, both as to the church and world, the grand lines as to both to the end of time, singing and saying with a loud voice, in honour of Christ, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to take the book and open the seals thereof, and to receive all blessing and praise, glory and honour, with all power and riches; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood, out of every kindred, and

tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth; saints indeed, real saints and sincere christians in and by the Son of God to the end of time; as all saints indeed will live and reign in heaven, through the endless ages of eternity, in and by the same Son of God. Rev. iv. v. chaps. Psal. ii. 7, 8. xxii. 27, 28, 31. lxxii. 5, 12, 16, 19. lxxxix. 1, 4, 19, 29. And xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. Psalms. Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13, 14, 21, 22, 27. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Ezek. xlviii. 35. Matt. i. 23. Rev. xi. 15, 17. Psal. xvi. 11. 1 Thess. iv. 17,

In the sixth and seventh chapters, we have the Lord Jesus Christ, who could only open the counsels of heaven, the bosom counsels of the Father, (for neither man nor angel could do it in the least instance) by, it would appear, six great events in Providence, opening six of the seven seals. How long these events in Providence, whether with respect to the church or world, were in opening, it is not for men to be positive, as all the times and the seasons are ever in God's hand only. Acts i. 6, 7.

Some confine the six first seals to fall within the beginning of Christ's public ministry, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, about forty years after the death of Christ, assigning seven years for each seal; which is too much for human wisdom to determine, I humbly think.

It is more likely, and highly probable, these different events in Providence, that the Son of God could only unfold, took up a much longer space, perhaps all the time, or nearly so, the Roman empire was heathen; and the church of Christ endured ten several very violent and bloody persecutions under Rome heathens. And still, under all these, christians, however great the numbers were that suffered martyrdom with truly christian and exalted heroism, such as Rome heathen knew nothing of; and the numbers over the empire were no doubt prodigious; yea, during that time, it would appear, no less than three and thirty christian bishops, or true gospel ministers, real servants of God in the gospel of his Son, one after another, for the love and sake of Jesus, in Rome itself, gloriously suffered martyrdom,

and

and rejoiced to seal with their blood in the cruellest manner, as well as all the other martyrs over the world in general, the divine mission, the amiable and glorious character of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Saviour, with the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the all of his word and religion.

I say, notwithstanding all these violent and long persecutions, and the most horrid cruelties earth and hell combined could devise, Christians still increased more and more, and greatly multiplied over the world; insomuch, that it became a proverbial saying, even to this day, the blood of the Saints is the seed of the church.

And the cruel, savage, barbarous, heathen Roman emperors found the more they put Christians to death, who died so gloriously for the love and sake of Jesus, and by his spirit and power, they increased more and more upon them every-where; insomuch, that it is well known, some of these bloody tyrants, what, from some small remains of humanity, but chiefly and principally from the over-ruling providence of God, renounced their empires and governments, and retired to private life.

Thus, in the beginning of the sixth chapter, John sees the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, upon opening the first seal, riding forth as the great Captain of Salvation, the Christ, the Son of the living God, in the chariot of the everlasting gospel, adorned with meekness, truth, and righteousness, cloathed with righteousness and salvation, yea, as God's salvation to all the ends of the earth, conquering and to conquer.

By the power of his word, grace, and spirit, plucking sinners as brands out of the burning, and building up all his saints and people in faith and holiness, unto eternal life and everlasting salvation, represented in the vision by one sitting on a white horse, having a bow in his hand, and a crown on his head. Rev. vi. 1, 2.

And by the other five seals in this chapter, it would appear, we have those awful and desolating judgments of Almighty God by the sword and war, by famine and pestilence, by death and eternal judgment after it, that were to come upon a whole ungodly world, that lived and died so,
for

for their open, wilful, and avowed contempt of Christ and the gospel, and particularly upon the obstinate and unbelieving Jews, by the Romans, who, in God's awful, but righteous, judgment, were destroyed both as a church and nation, about forty years after they had crucified the Lord of glory; and to this day, according to the word of God, which cannot fail, Matt. v. 18, They are as strangers and vagabonds on the face of the earth, and will be until they, by grace, embrace Christ and the gospel, according to the same word of God. Matt. xxiii. 37, 39. Luke xviii. 34, 35. Rom. xi. 17, 36.

Upon the Roman empire, while heathen, by wasting and destruction, by civil broils and feuds, murders, war, and bloodshed, the innocent blood of the many thousands of Christian martyrs, they spilt like water upon the earth, crying to God in heaven for vengeance upon them.

In the seventh chapter, amidst all these desolating judgments upon the earth, and before such a deluge of pernicious and soul-ruining errors should overspread the visible church of God, in a manner, as the four winds of heaven go over the face of the earth, we find twelve thousand of every tribe of Israel, a definite for an indefinite number, excepting the tribe of Dan, which was likely for their idolatry, cut off from the earth at least as a tribe in Israel before this. Gen. xlix. 16, 17. Deut. xxxiii. 22. Amos viii. 14.

And Joseph, who was separated from his brethren, according to Jacob's prophecy when a-dying, Gen. xlix. 5, was made two of the twelve tribes in Israel, with an innumerable company of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues over the world, all sealed in their foreheads, set apart for God and his Christ, for God and religion in the world, and taken both under the divine direction and protection, all the numerous hosts of saints already triumphant in heaven, with all the holy angels, as also all saints militant upon earth, blessing, praising, adoring, and magnifying God and his Christ. Rev. vi. vii. chapters.

DISSERTATION III.

Upon the grand Discoveries made to John in this Revelation of Jesus Christ, as to his true Church ; first, as in the Wilderness, during the Reign of Antichrist, One Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Years ; and after that, the glorious Spread and Success of the Gospel of Christ among Jews and Gentiles, in a Manner, over the World, by the Power of his Word, Grace, and Spirit, until real Grace here issues in Glory hereafter ; with the Rise and Progress, Reign and Fall, both of Antichrist and Mahomet ; with the In-bringing of the Jews after that, and indeed of the Destruction at last of all the implacable Enemies of God and of his Christ ; as from the Beginning of the Eighth Chapter to the Close.

FROM the beginning of the eighth chapter to the end of this revelation of Jesus Christ, we have great mysteries opened up to the end of the world, which the Son of God could only unfold.

As the state of the church of Christ, during the reign of Antichrist, twelve hundred and sixty years, and from thence to the end of the world.

As the rise and progress, the reign and fall, both of the Roman Antichrist and of Mahomet, and upon that the glorious spread and success of the everlasting gospel, among Jews as well as Gentiles, over the world ; insomuch, that the kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever, by law and love, by the power of his word, grace, and spirit, in and over all believing hearts and souls, with their lips and lives, and with the same infinite ease over and amidst all his and his people's enemies. For which grand event, all saints and angels, saints militant upon earth, and triumphant in heaven, bless, praise, and magnify, thank and adore God and his Christ, Almighty God, because he hath taken to himself his great power, and hath reigned. Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17. Psa. cx. 1, 2, 3.

Thus,

Thus, in the beginning of the eighth chapter, upon opening the seventh seal, the apostle John tells us there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour; that is, it would appear, when Constantine, a Christian, by means of the Christians, overcame Maxentius, a heathen, in battle, and made Christianity the religion of the whole Roman empire by profession, there was peace in the church of God, and in a manner over the world for a short space, here said to be about the space of half an hour, until Arius arose, and broached his gross heresy, denying the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, in direct opposition to every word and work of God. And Sylvester, the very first Pope of Rome, or that so much as pretended to any such thing, in consequence of a grant given him by Constantine, before he removed the seat of the Roman empire to Bizantium, that is Constantinople, and went there himself, as Roman emperor, to live and reside, giving him the town or city of Rome, with great lands and dominion thereabouts, and also, it is said, a triple crown, in token, that he made him supreme head over all the churches in Asia, Africa, and Europe, out of pride and worldly ambition, greatly corrupted and depraved Christianity, and so set up the real kingdom of Antichrist in the visible church of God. For by the divine description given of him, in the name of the Son of God, through the Holy Ghost, long before he actually appeared, he could be no where else, but in the visible church; as the apostles of Christ fully shew Paul; 2 Theff. ii, chap. 2 Pet. ii, chap. John in this revelation of Jesus Christ.

The time when this grant was given, is said to have been about the year of Christ three hundred and sixteen: Although some dispute that Constantine made any such grant to Sylvester, from some suspicious circumstances attending the grant itself, as recorded by the church of Rome to this day; but think that after Constantine left Rome, and went to reside at Constantinople, Sylvester proudly assumed all this in the Emperor's absence.

And indeed to any person that knows, and impartially considers the whole matter, the latter is much more likely than the former; as for certain, before the above date, there

there are two sorts of indictions in place of the old Olympiads; the first called Constantines, bearing date in the year of Christ three hundred and twelve, on the twenty-fourth day of September; as on that day, it would appear, he won the empire in battle from Maxentius. The other indiction is called Pontifical, or by Sylvester, beginning the first day of January three hundred and thirteen; each of these indictions containing fifteen years. From which indiction of pope Sylvester, the Romish church counts her dates to this day, as the Greeks and Romans counted time by their Olympiads, and the Jews by their Jubilees.

Thus John, the beloved apostle and disciple of Christ, assures us and all the world, that whenever the great antichrist appeared in the visible church, he should be seated in a great city, built upon seven high hills, in which there should be seven kings, or sorts of government. Rev. xvii. 9, 10, 11.

That Rome stands upon seven hills, the world cannot dispute. Their very first and greatest poet, Virgil, calls it seven-hilled Rome. That there had been kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes, which were all fallen before John's time; and that now they had emperors, the sixth sort of government, cannot be refused: Although it would appear Domitian was now dead, and Nerva succeeded him as emperor for a short space; as Charlemagne afterwards, and other Germans and Romans, made in a sort the eighth government, and indeed were of the seventh sort. Rev. xvii. 9, 10, 11. The apostle Paul, who, in the name of the Son of God, by the word and spirit of the Lord Jesus, describes antichrist, in a few lines, to the very life; very particularly points out this circumstance of antichrist's appearance in the visible church of God in Sylvester, as the very first pope, more than two hundred and fifty years before the event took place.

He who now letteth or hindereth, will let or hinder until he be taken out of the way; the heathen Roman emperor be removed by Constantine, and Constantine, a christian emperor, removed to Constantinople; and then shall that wicked, viz. antichrist be revealed. 2 Thess. ii. 5, 12.

And therefore the church of Rome, or spiritual Babylon, under the pope and popery, is and must be antichrist. Rev. xi. 8. xvii. 5. Antichrist was to come in with craft and subtilty into the visible church of God, after the working of satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, or pretended miracles, he was to sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God; opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, and every thing sacred; speaking great things, and blasphemies. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 12. Rev. xiii. 5, 6. And that Sylvester, and the following popes, thus arose to all their worldly pomp and grandeur, cannot be justly refused by any: That they pretended to work miracles, and that many have been wrought by them, which are all lying wonders or pure juggling tricks, as the apostle styles them; for God only can or ever did work a real miracle, and that in confirmation of his own truth. Exod. viii. 19. John xv. 24. Yea, that the pope has opposed himself to and exalted himself above the very Son of God, and trampled upon his laws, as by assuming at last the name of God, and giving laws in direct opposition to his, the world cannot refuse. For all these characters, drawn by the good and holy Spirit of God, in the word of God, answer to the Roman antichrist, just as face does to face in water.

And all the world cannot shew another place but Rome, or another people upon earth, that answers the above divine and unerring description. Matt. vii. 15, 20. xii. 33. Luke vi. 43, 45. Rev. xi. 8. xiii. 4, 9. xvii. 5, 9, 10, 11.

The pope's triple crown, in token, or pretence rather, of his being the supreme head of all the churches of Asia, Africa, and Europe, or indeed the then known world; and both swords, civil and ecclesiastic, as if he was possessed of all power, whether in the church or world; yea, in a manner, in heaven or earth, under the assumed title of servant of servants, but as the vicar or representative; and by all the meaning of the word, as in the very place and room, or stead, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the very and eternal Son of God,

God, as well as his Son by office, as Mediator and Saviour; so openly, so often, so long, so proudly and gorgeously, so blasphemously wore by popes before all the world, are great lines in the character of antichrist, when and wherever he should appear. 2 Theff. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 5, 6, 7, 8. xvii. 5.

His forbidding to marry, as is the case with himself and all his clergy, and also the use of certain meats, which God hath created to be used, and received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth. 1 Tim. iv. 3. As all use of flesh in Lent, or on Fridays every day of the week through the year.

The prophet Daniel, chap. xi. 38, 45 verses, under the figure of Antiochus, at least between eight and nine hundred years before the great antichrist appeared with his breathen god, the mass, first celebrated in the days of Sylvester, it would appear, in memory of the martyrs, and upon their graves; which made-god the Romish church ever since hath worshipped, and then eat him up. Mahuzim, a god their fathers knew not, they were to worship.

The palace or seat of antichrist was to be between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain or visible church of God, exactly the situation of Rome, between the tossings of the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas, all the world knows: Yea, the Lord Jesus Christ tells his apostles and disciples there should be false Christs and false prophets, shewing great signs and wonders, lying wonders, insomuch, if it was possible, they should deceive the very elect.

“Behold, I have told you before: Wherefore, if they shall say, behold, he is in the desert, to bless the barren wilderness; or, behold, he is in the secret chambers, lockt up in the securest manner, a false Christ, believe it not, for it is all lies,” Matt. xxiv. 23, 26.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, the apostle John, tells us, that whenever the great antichrist should appear in the visible church of God, he should arise out of and with all the power of the great red dragon, that had seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head; that is, the great Latin or Roman empire, which was called Latin from

Latinus, one of their first kings; whose name in Greek characters, Lateinos, according to the custom of the Greeks, in which language John wrote this Revelation of Jesus Christ, taken numerically, makes exactly six hundred and sixty-six. Rev. xiii. 18. Which shows all the world, that the great Roman antichrist arose, and only could arise, out of Rome heathen, or the great red dragon.

Thus John, in the thirteenth chapter, sees a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, instead of seven, like the old Latin or Roman empire, which was called Latin from Latinus, Roman from Romulus, another of their ancient kings. And this beast, or great antichrist, which I saw, was like unto a leopard, his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon, the great red dragon, or Latin and Roman empire, heathen from their beginning, gave him his power and his seat, and great authority. The lion was the sign or ensign of the Babylonians, the bear of the Persians, the leopard of the Grecians, as the eagle of the Romans.

Thus John, as Daniel long before, chaps. ii. and vii. at large, shows us and all the world, that as the Roman commonwealth, and then empire, while heathen, was possessed of all the power and authority, the wealth and policy, and much stronger, long much stronger, and of greater extent than any of the former three grand monarchies, or perhaps all of them put together. Rev. xii. 3. xiii. 1, 2. Thus John, I say, in this Revelation of Jesus Christ, or this vision from heaven of things to come, sees the old Latin or Roman empire divided into ten kingdoms, the whole western empire, by means of the Goths, Huns, and at last the Vandals, about the year of our Lord four hundred and fifty-six or seven; and then the very name and authority, with the last shadow of a Roman emperor taken away in Augustulus, or little Augustus, or Cæsar, by Odoacer, king of the Herculians, in the year of Christ four hundred and seventy-six, or thereabouts. And he sees the same beast, or great antichrist, now possessed of the power, the seat, and the great authority of the great red dragon, coming up out of the earth,

earth, (for he had no relation to, nor connection with, heaven) as a lamb with two horns, in the appearance of a lamb for innocence, but exercising all the power of the first Roman beast or heathen empire, although a pretended Christian, as with all the strength and fury, the prowess, the savage rage and cruelty of the red dragon, the lion, and the bear, and as with all the swiftness of the leopard, and loftiness of the eagle, as well as speed, insomuch, that all the world wondered after the beast, that is the bulk, or a very great part of it, the western world in general. And they worshipped, that is submitted to, the great antichrist, now exercising all the power and authority of the great red dragon; yea, they worshipped or submitted to the dragon himself, as the outer court of the Gentiles, or a great part of the visible church of God, that is, wherever the power and influence of the great antichrist extended over the western world, was formed, planned, and moulded upon the very pattern and model of the Roman empire, while heathen, in her governors and provinces, and in a manner in the substance and body of her laws, and in some measure upon the maxims of vain heathen philosophy, and still more absurd maxims of Jewish superstition and bigotry.

Thus it is evident, as the light of the sun at noon, the antichristian church of Rome was formed upon these maxims and principles in her clergy, from the pope himself to her lowest clergyman, in her laws ecclesiastic and canonical, in her whole constitution and frame in general, after the rudiments of the world, and the doctrines and commandments of men, and not after Christ and his royal laws, pure and holy doctrines, uniformly taught and published in his name, by his spirit and power, and with all his authority, by his prophets in the Old, and apostles in the New Testament, and also by himself, while here in person in the flesh; which principles and practices, or human inventions, with all their institutions of men whatever, in the matters of God and religion, wherever they are, or take place in the world, are laid under the curse of God, as the whole book of God fully shews. Isa. viii. 20. 2 Col. iv. Psa. xix. 7, 11. Jer. xv. 16. Matt. xv. 9, 23. viii. 12. Mark vii. 7, 8, 10, 42, 45. Luke xxii.

xxii. 24, 28. Gal. iv. 3, 9, 10, 11. vi. 16. Col. ii. 4, 8, 16, 23. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 4. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 9. 2 Pet. i. 16, 21. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Thus all the inventions and institutions of men, in the matters of God and religion, always were, are, and ever will be, both unpleasing to God, and unprofitable to men. Matt. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7, 8.

And he had a mouth given unto him, viz. Antichrist, that is, he was permitted of God, and, under the influence of sin and satan, and the love of the world, he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, his name, his tabernacle, with men, in his Son, both in heaven and earth, speaking great things and blasphemies, both by doctrine and precept, and by practice, with all his thundering excommunications.

And power was given unto him, that is, he was allowed and permitted of God, to continue forty and two months, or as Daniel expresses it, A time, times, and an half, or half a time, Dan. xii. 7. Rev. xii. 14; that is, three years and an half, of prophetic days, viz. years, which is just twelve hundred and sixty years.

Thus John also sees that all this time he should be allowed and permitted of God, for the least sin or wickedness in the world never was by God's agency, nor with his approbation, nor possibly can be, to make war with the saints, or people of God, his true worshippers, and to overcome them. And he was permitted of God, in the same manner, to assume power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, submitting to his rule and government, whose names were not written in the book of life, of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; that is, all such as were not kept by the power and spirit of God, and by his word and special providence, from his baneful influence. Rev. xiii. at large.

And, therefore, from all these, and many other considerations, as a sort of secondary worship to angels and canonised saints, as they call them, transubstantiation, and the merit of good works, selling of pardons and indulgencies at a price, or as an apostle of Christ styles it, the souls of men, &c. These all shew that the Romish church is and must be antichrist.

Thus

Thus John, in this revelation of Jesus Christ, by the same vision from heaven, sees Mahomet, that vile impostor, who first professed Christ and Christianity, and then apostatizes, and falls as a star from heaven, or the true church of Christ upon earth. Mahomet arose about the year of Christ five hundred and ninety-one, and with the help of Sergius, a monk, or Romish priest, contrived and framed the whole Alcoran, to gratify the appetites, and soothe the passions of men, allowing them whatever was agreeable to corrupt nature, teaching all his followers to believe in one only living and true God; to believe Moses and the prophets, and even acknowledge Christ a true prophet; but that he himself was the great prophet, promising heaven to all that died fighting under his banner, commanding to establish his Alcoran, and propagate his religion by blood; and accordingly began his conquests by means of the Saracens, in the year of Christ six hundred and thirteen; insomuch, that by eight hundred and six, the light of God's truth was greatly obscured, what by the awful impieties, gross heresies, and foolish superstitions and traditions of the pope, and his clergy in the west, and of Mahomet, the very basest and vilest of mortals, in the east.

Zadock, in the year of Christ one thousand and fifty-one; Chan of Tartary, twelve hundred and one; Ottoman, twelve hundred and ninety-six, at the head of the Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and Arabians; these all strove, with all their might, and by all means, to establish the empire, and propagate the religion of Mahomet.

And the Ottoman, with these four nations, especially from about the Euphrates, numerous as locusts or grasshoppers, in a manner, established a vast and prodigious empire both in Asia and Europe; which, in the awful but righteous judgment of God, continues to this day. Rev. ix. chap. at large.

Thus the opening of the seals first, and then the sounding of the trumpets, disclose and proclaim these great events in providence, and the pouring down of the vials and the thunders will bring down the enemies of God and of his Christ,
and

and open a way in providence, for the bringing in of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentile nations.

But during the reign of antichrist, and of Mahomet, Christ's two witnesses were to prophecy in sackcloth, a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or a time, times, and half a time, or forty and two months; that is, according to the prophets, twelve hundred and sixty years. The witnesses seem to be represented as two, in allusion to Moses and Aaron, with the church of God in Egypt, at the Red Sea; and in the wilderness, to David and Samuel in Israel of old, Elijah and Elisha also in Canaan, in opposition to all the priests of Baal, to Daniel and Mordecai, and also Ezra and Nehemiah, in the Babylonish captivity, and Joshua the high-priest, and Zerubabel the governor after it.

Thus, in the twelfth chapter, John sees a great wonder in heaven, a woman, that is the true church of Christ, cloathed with the sun, the glorious sun of righteousness, the all-perfect robe of Christ's righteousness as mediator, and adorned inwardly with inherent righteousness, and the all of true gospel holiness, and the moon or all sublunary things under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, Christ enthroned in her heart, and always upon her head, and the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, accompanied with the saving and gracious influences of his grace and spirit, reigning and ruling in their hearts and souls, and over their lips and lives, unto eternal life and everlasting salvation, in and by the Son of God, and by him alone.

And she being with child, as a mother fruitful of children to God, laboured in pain to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven, says he, a great red dragon, viz. the Roman empire, worshippers of Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and many false gods, which were indeed no gods; and the dragon had seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns, or sorts of governments upon his heads; which shews all the world that this was Rome heathen. And this great red dragon, by his tail, or his great power and wicked policy, slew, in a manner, the third part of Christians, in ten several, long, and very bloody persecutions,

tions, which at last in the awful, but just and righteous, judgment of Almighty God, turned him off the throne altogether, and made this as his tail, or last push for sin and satan indeed. And christians, however thus martyred for the love and sake of Jesus, still encreased more and more; insomuch, that the very heathens could not help observing, that the blood of christians was the seed of the church of Christ.

And that this woman was the true church of God is evident, for she already in the fulness of time brought forth the Lord Jesus Christ as man, who is both God and man in one person, and is already become an exalted Prince and Saviour in heaven; and so also all the martyrs, or real saints and sincere christians, departed this life, are gone to heaven with him. And she is still under all her persecutions, bringing forth many sons and children unto God. Psa. lxxii. 16, 17. lxxxvii. 5, 6. Isa. lxvi. 8, 9. Gal. iv. 19.

And however the Lord Jesus Christ is possessed of all power and authority, might and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth; yet, in the pure and holy sovereignty of God, who is ever God in all he does, the true church of Christ is reduced to fly into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God for her; that they should feed her there twelve hundred and sixty days, that is, years, for prophetic days or years.

And in this divine vision to John, there was war in heaven, or the true church of God upon earth; Michael and his angels fought against the great red dragon; and the dragon and his angels, all under the power and influence of sin and satan, fought, and prevailed not. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, in and with his saints and servants, with infinite ease, prevailed against the dragon and his angels, with all the powers of earth and hell combined; and the Roman empire, as heathen, went down with all heathen idolatry, or indeed Jewish superstition.

Thus, in the year of Christ three hundred and sixty-five, when Julian the apostate (for he before professed Christ and Christianity) had ordered the Jews to build up and repair

the temple at Jerusalem, and sent his legates to offer sacrifices for him, and also consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphos for him, God sent his thunder, with fire and lightning, from above, and an earthquake from beneath, about one and the same time, and totally demolished both these temples, and for ever disannulled all their superstitions, both Jewish and heathen. Thus when the Roman empire goes down in Maxentius, and Constantine, a christian, makes Christianity the religion of the empire, in the year of Christ three hundred and twelve, I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, not only in the excellent glory, but all over the church and world upon earth in a manner, says John, it would appear, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Rev. xii. chap. at large.

In the thirteenth chapter, John sees the great Roman antichrist arise out of the earth and the sea, for he owed nothing of his original to heaven. He could only arise, as antichrist, from earth and hell combined. He sees him possessed of the seat, the power, and great authority of the great red dragon, having his seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten instead of seven crowns; which Rome heathen was only ever possessed of. For antichrist's kingdom was soon divided into ten kingdoms, viz. in the year of Christ four hundred and fifty-six, and the empire for ever extinguished four hundred and seventy-six, or thereabouts. He sees him in the appearance of a lamb, but with all the cunning of the old serpent, the strength and rage of the lion and the bear, the swiftness of the leopard or eagle; exercising all the power and prowess of the great red dragon, or old heathen Roman empire; persecuting the saints and people of God also to the death as he did, by means of the secular powers, and that in immense numbers; forbidding earth or stone, fire or water, house or harbour, to all such as would not receive his mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads; that is, submit to his authority, as Roman generals marked their soldiers in their foreheads, and

and masters were wont of old to mark their slaves in their right-hands.

Thus antichrist exercised lordship and dominion over a great part of the western world, although the whole Greek church never submitted to his authority, nor acknowledged his dominion; with, no doubt, very many in, as well as out of all communion with him, as the man of sin and son of perdition. 2 Theff. ii. 3.

Thus Lactantius, before Sylvester was made pope, at least before he could pretend to any grant as such by Constantine, inveighed against images, superstitious rights and ornaments, in the three hundredth year of Christ: Antonius Eremite against the worshipping of saints, relics, and the orders of their clergy, three hundred and fifty: Hilaves against human traditions and free-will, three hundred and sixty: Vigilantius against the worshipping of departed saints and their relics, and celibacy, about the same time: Epiphanius, in the year three hundred and seventy, publicly inveighed against the worshipping of the Virgin Mary, or saints, and tore a picture of Jesus Christ: Augulline, three hundred and eighty, inveighed against rites and ceremonies, forbearing of meats, and worshipping of saints; and expresses just sentiments of holy scripture, and justification by Christ's righteousness alone, through faith: Jerome, three hundred and ninety, writes against the pope's primacy, and calleth Rome, Babylon: Chrysostom, about the year four hundred, does the same with many more; as any person may see, not only by the history of those times, but particularly in an old book entitled "The Catalogue of the Witnesses of the Truth." About the year five hundred, Alachis, king of the Lombards, openly opposed the pope and popery: Clemens Scotus and Adelbertus Gallus, seven hundred and fifteen, opposed popery and tyranny; for which they were both excommunicated by the pope Cladius Allidionencis, or Cladius Clemens Scotus, in the eight hundredth year of Christ, bore witness against popery: Methodius Illyricus, in the year eight hundred and sixty, translated the scriptures into them other tongue to the Slaves and Vandals. But not to multiply examples in a case so plain,

where every person that had the least knowledge of the holy scriptures, or due sense, one would say, of God and religion, whether in or without the church of Rome, must abhor their gross idolatries and superstitions, and profane absurdities.

Thus prodigious numbers always opposed the pope and popery in all different ages and countries, as witness the Albigenes and Waldenses, with others in great numbers; of which two former noble and worthy people alone were slain; in the twelfth century, in France only, it is said, ten hundred thousand men. Baldvinus, concerning antichrist, noteth almost nine hundred thousand worthy orthodox christians put to death by the executioner.

The Duke D'Alva gloried that in a few years, in Belgium only, he had put to death thirty-six thousand christians. One Sanders, a papist, confesses that many Lollards and others were burnt to ashes, and put to death, over all Europe; not to mention the Paris and Irish massacres, the number of innocent persons, or of christians, that have been put to death by the holy, as they call it, but horrid inquisition indeed, which perhaps exceeds all numbers.

Thus Rome, under the false mask of Christianity and vile hypocrisy, has murdered and butchered, in different ways, many more christians than Rome heathen had done, in ten long and very violent and bloody persecutions: Whereas the religion of Jesus, the religion of God and of his Christ, as the whole book of God fully shows all the world, ever since God's Son was revealed as a Saviour, always was, is, and indeed only can be, a religion of love, peace, and truth; grace, holiness, and happiness; God-likeness and Christ-likeness, is the whole of it: Insomuch, that love to Jesus Christ, and God as in Christ; divine, redeeming love, shed abroad in the heart, and reigning in the soul, and over the lips and life, by the Holy Ghost; and as the inseparable effect of that, love to all saints, with a pure heart, fervently; yea, love and goodwill to all mankind, is not only the great, the universal, and leading law in the kingdom of Christ; but every law in his kingdom, from beginning to end, is just one continued law of love.

And

And, therefore, no man, nor no set of men, upon the face of God's earth, ever had the least allowance, by any law of Christ, to shed the least drop of human, much less Christian, blood, upon the account of religion and a good conscience; as the following passages of holy scripture fully shew all the world. James iv. 12. Rom. xiv. 4. Matt. xv. 9, 20, 25, 28. xxii. 37, 40. xxiii. 8, 12. Mark vii. 7, 9, 10, 42, 43. Luke xxii. 24, 27. John xiii. 35. xiv. 15. xv. 14. 1 John iii. 14. iv. 7, 16. v. 3, 4, 5. Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. 1 Cor. xiii. chapter at large.

Thus, in the fourteenth chapter, John sees the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; the King of kings, and Lord of lords, standing upon Mount Sion, surrounded with a great company of his saints and people, a very great multitude of different nations, tongues, and kindreds of mankind, who were redeemed from the earth, and not defiled with women, neither with spiritual nor carnal fornication, but that followed the Lamb of God, whithersoever he went; who were singing a new song of love, praise, gratitude, and thanksgiving to God and his Christ, before angels and men, viz. all saints, whether militant upon earth, or triumphant in heaven.

Upon the reformation from popery and antichristian tyranny, it would appear, by the preaching of the blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel, by Luther, Calvin, Melancton, and others, in the year of Christ fifteen hundred and forty-one. And so it is proclaimed aloud all over the church and world, Babylon is fallen, the Roman antichrist, or spiritual mystical Babylon, is already begun to fall; a considerable part of her is just now fallen, and she will, most assuredly, in due time, fall totally and altogether. Matt. v. 18. Isa. xlvi. 9, 10, 11. 2 Chron. vi. 4, 8, 10, 15. Psa. xxxvii. 5.

But as to all such as live by faith on the Son of God, and walk in the love and fear of God, in obedience to Christ and the gospel; write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, in real union, and of one spirit with the Son of God, faith both the word and spirit of the Lord Jehovah, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

And

And so John sees a great harvest of souls brought home to God, in the Son of his Love, by the gospel of his grace. Rev. xiv. chap. at large.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, John sees the seven vials of the wrath of God, or the seven last plagues, poured out, with voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. But all real saints and sincere Christians, rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and in God as in Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways; thou King of saints, who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? For all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, it would appear, John sees the ten kings, or kingdoms, that had agreed to give their power, with all their interest and influence, to the great Roman antichrist, for so long a time, hating this harlot church, whose real name, by God himself, was and is, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots or fornications, spiritual and carnal, and abominations of the earth, in a manner, all abominations of the earth collected together, or ingrossed in one. And so at last, in God's time and way, throwing her off, or casting her down, as an abominable thing to the earth, from whence she sprung, with all her worldly wealth, pomp, and grandeur.

John's description of this antichristian church is so full and particular, so plain, that he that runs may read; yea, one should think that no person that knows the holy scriptures, and has the least notion of popery, as popery, wherever it is, can mistake his account of this truly sorry, but awful, matter, indeed.

Thus, in the beginning of the eighteenth chapter, upon the preaching of the blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel, after the reformation from popery, in the course of time, which is only perfectly known to God, already more than two hundred and fifty years gone, viz. from the year fifteen hundred and forty-one, to this present seventeen hundred

dred and ninety-four, and when or how soon after God only knows perfectly, before whom all things or events are ever naked and open, whether in time or eternity. He hears it proclaimed from heaven, with great power and glory, it would seem, by the very voice of the Son of God, in the gospel of his grace, powerfully backed, with the saving and divine influences of his all-conquering word, grace, and spirit, in, upon, and amongst his saints and people upon earth, all his true churches in the world. *Babylon the Great is fallen*, is fallen! (let all mankind be assured of it) and shall arise no more; to her merchandize of gold and silver, and all manner of precious things, and goods or stores, and even her sale of slaves, and the souls of men. Which merchandize, all the world knows, she has so very long dealt in, viz. by her pardons and indulgencies, as well as otherwise.

For the word and spirit of God, and of his Christ, by Paul, assures us, and all mankind, that Antichrist should be brought down, by the spirit of the Lord Christ's mouth, and by the brightness of his coming in the gospel of his grace; that is, by the dispensation thereof, accompanied with the power of his grace and spirit. 2 Theff. ii. 8. Hab. iv. 12, 13. Zech. iv. 6. John vi. 63. Psa. xix. 7, 11. cx. 1, 2, 3.

All the saints and people of God, with his prophets and apostles, and all the holy angels, yea, in one word, all real saints and sincere Christians, whether in heaven or earth, rejoicing in Jesus Christ and his great salvation, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Rev. xviii. chap. at large.

In the nineteenth chapter, John, in this heavenly and divine vision, sees the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Redeemer of souls, riding forth in the chariot of the everlasting gospel, as the word of God, the personal word of the Father, cloathed with righteousness and salvation, as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation, as King of kings, and Lord of lords; as having taken to himself his great power, and reigning, ruling by law and love, by his word, grace, and spirit, in all his saints and people, and with the same infinite ease over and amidst all his and their enemies.

All

All saints, indeed, in earth as well as heaven, saying, Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications and idolatries, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hands. And again they said, Alleluia! and again, Amen, Alleluia!

And I saw the beast, the great Roman antichrist, with the worshippers of the false prophet Mahomet, it would seem, to make war with the Son of God and his army, who are all called faithful and chosen.

And the great Antichrist, and Mahomet, that false prophet, were both taken, and cast alive into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; and the smoke of their torment rose up for ever and ever.

And the total ruin and final overthrow both of Mahomet and of Antichrist, made way for the bringing in of the kings of the east, Rev. xvi. 12. That is, it would appear, not the four nations of Mahomet under Ottoman, who, in the year of Christ twelve hundred and ninety-six, at the head of the Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and Arabians, from about the Euphrates, established a vast and prodigious empire both in Asia and Europe; but the bringing in of the people of the Jews to Christ and the gospel, the seed of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, Rev. xix. chap. at large. Which grand event, the apostle Paul to the Romans shews, will be as life from the dead to the Gentile world. For God himself assures us, and all the world, that if the ordinances of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars can depart, or the motion of the sea cease, then shall the Jews, the seed of Abraham, and not till then, cease from before me, from being a people or nation. Jer. xxxi. 31, 36. Rom. xi. 11, 36. Isa. ix. 6, 7. xl. 9, 10, 11. lix. 20, 21. lx. 1, 2, 3, 8, 22. lxi. 7, 8. lxii. 4, 10, 11, 12. lxv. 17, 19. Jer. xxiii. 5, 8. xxxi. 31, 37. Ezek. xxxvii. 25, 28. xxxix. 25, 29. Dan. vii. 27, 28. Psa. lxxxix. 3, 4, 28, 29. Zech. xii. 10.

Thus these passages of holy scripture, with many others, shew that, in God's good time and way, the Jews will be converted to Christ and Christianity.

Thus

Thus, in the twentieth chapter, we have the Son of God, with infinite ease, binding that old serpent, called the devil and satan, which so early deceived our first parents even in paradise, and had so much reigned and ruled in and over so many of their degenerate offspring ever since, and particularly by popish superstitions, idolatries, and blasphemies; Mahometan delusions, Pagan impieties, Jewish superstition, bigotry, and unbelief, now so long restraining his power and influence upon sinners of mankind, a wicked world, and binding himself in chains under darkness, as if the key of his infernal prison was turned upon him, for the space of a thousand years; thus binding and restraining him in such a manner, it would appear, as he had never been before. He was greatly restrained by the preaching of Christ and his apostles, and by the gospel ever since; by the reformation from popery; and will be in God's good time and way by the downfall both of popery and Mahometanism; and then by the power of the word, grace, and spirit of Christ, at the same time, most likely, that satan is thus a-binding, the Jews are brought in, with the fulness of the Gentile nations, and the kingdoms of this world in general become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. The light, love, and life of Christ, and the power of his word, grace, and spirit, prevail and flourish every where amongst Jews and Gentiles, in a manner over the world it would seem; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, is given to the people of the saints of the most high God, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions in the earth shall serve and obey the Son of God, believe and obey Christ and the gospel; that is, many of all nations, tongues, kindreds of mankind. Dan. ii. 44, 45. vii. 27, 28. Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17.

And thus saints indeed, real saints and sincere christians, in different nations and countries, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, all the time satan is bound up. Christ shall reign spiritually and evidently, by law and love, by the power of his word, grace, and spirit, in all believing hearts and souls, and over their lips and lives, all over the

church of God, and with the same infinite ease over and amidst all his and his people's enemies over the world: But not visibly in his body as here in the flesh, according to the vain conjecture and groundless opinion of some, in direct opposition to what unerring wisdom and eternal truth assures us and all the world of; that the Lord Jesus Christ will reign in glory at the Father's right-hand, until all his enemies be made, or become as his footstool. Psal. cx. 1.

And the apostle Paul assures all the world, that he will come again at the last day, the second time without sin, unto salvation; no more as a sacrifice for sin, as in his first coming in the flesh, but to put all his saints and people for ever in full and ample possession of eternal life and everlasting salvation, as sole Lord Judge of the world, in and by himself, and by him alone. Heb. ix. 28. Matt. xxv. 34. Acts xvii. 31. Whereas, according to the above opinion, it would be the third time, which it cannot be. And this grand resurrection, both of Jews and of Gentiles; so very many of them in a manner over the world, with all saints indeed in general, from the death of sin to the life of true gospel holiness, John seems to represent as the first resurrection, according to the holy scriptures in general, and the New Testament in particular; which, wherever it is, always insures a resurrection to glory, honour, and immortality, in and by the Son of God at the last day. Col. iii. 1, 4. 1 John iii. 1, 2.

And in the name of the Son of God, by the Holy Ghost, he pronounces all such blessed, holy, and happy, as are thus now in this life risen with Christ; upon which not only the remains of antichrist, and of Mahomet perhaps, but all the implacable enemies of God and of his Christ, or of his religion, over the world, upon satan being loosed a little, gather themselves together from the four quarters of the earth, numerous in a manner as locusts, or the sand of the sea, to battle against God and his saints; and they go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints, or beloved city, the true church of Christ, about. And the wrath of God, with his power and providence, as easily scatters and destroys them, as fire consumes any combustible

bustible matter. And the devil and all his servants and vassals are at last cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, with all the wicked of the world that lived and died before this out of Christ. Matt. xxv. 41.

Upon which, John sees a great white throne erected, (when and where it is neither for men nor angels to say) as the judgment-seat of Christ, before whom the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no more place for them. And Christ being seated on this throne, as sole Lord Judge of the world, clothed with all his own glory as mediator, with the glory of the Father, attended with an innumerable company of holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, before him are gathered all nations. And the dead in Christ arise first: And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, says John. The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead; and they were all judged in righteousness, according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, or eternal death. And whosoever of mankind were not found in the book of life, were cast into the same lake of fire. Rev. xx. chap. at large. Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. Matt. xxiv. 36.

In the twenty-first chapter, and twenty-second to the sixth verse, the apostle John, and beloved disciple of Christ, in this heavenly and divine vision, has a truly glorious and exalted view of heaven, in all its happiness and glory; no doubt supposing and allowing, as indeed the whole book of God uniformly does, that the life and state of grace here is just a native and necessary introduction to the life, state, and world of glory for ever and ever hereafter. And I saw, says he, a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, were no more; and there was no more sea. And I John, says he, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, saints already so long triumphant in heaven, coming down from God out of heaven, with all saints then found alive upon the earth, all prepared of God for the marriage supper of the Lamb, as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will

dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And as God, as in Christ, was always in, with, and amongst all his saints and people upon earth, so they shall now eternally be with him in heaven, the excellent glory; all advanced to the immediate vision, the full, the final, and eternal fruition of him; and he will be their God in Christ, in covenant, and they shall be his people, his sons and daughters for ever and ever, saith the Lord Jehovah, the Almighty God. And there shall be no more crying or tears, no more pain or sorrow, no more death. And he that sat upon the throne, still upon the throne of judgment, it would appear, said, Behold, I make all things new.

Upon which, John shews the awful state of all the wicked and ungodly that lived and died so in the eternal world, and, on the other hand, the unspeakable bliss and inconceivable happiness of all the redeemed of the Lord, all such of mankind as are then found justified by the blood and righteousness, and sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord Jesus; they are all openly acknowledged and acquitted by him in judgment, and so shall they ever be with the Lord, in his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at his right-hand, where there are rivers of divine pleasures for evermore; being all heirs of God and of glory; heirs of God through Christ, and joint-heirs with Christ. And I saw no temple therein, says John, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; the light, life, and glory thereof. There will be no written word, no sabbaths, no sacraments, as here; no external ordinances, but the Lord God and the Lamb are the life and light thereof: Christ will be the eternal band of union, and the glorious medium and mean of communion between God and all his saints; their light love, and life; their righteousness and strength, their peace and hope; and God, as in Christ, their portion and happiness, their God and their all, for ever and ever. Rev. xxi. xxii. chaps. Psal. xvi. 11. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. Col. iii. 1, 4. 1 Theff. iv. 17. 1 John iii. 1, 2. Upon

Upon which, from the sixth verse of the twenty-second chapter to the close, John, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his word, spirit, and power, and with all his authority, shuts up the whole of this revelation of Jesus Christ, and indeed the whole book of God, and lays any man under the curse of God that shall either add to, or diminish from, it, whilst sun and moon endure.

He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.

Thus this book of Divine revelation and prophecy, both as to doctrine and prophecy, is full of divine light and evidence for Christ and Christianity, and unanswerably demonstrates to all the world, the infallible truth and glorious certainty of the word of God.



B O O K

B O O K IX.

UPON THE DOCTRINES AND DUTIES OF CHRISTIANITY,
WITH THE OFFICES AND ORDINANCES OF CHRIST'S
OWN APPOINTMENT IN HIS CHURCH, AND
HOW AND WHY THESE ARE TO BE EM-
BRACED AND HELD FAST BY
ALL CHRISTIANS.

DISSERTATION I.

*Upon the essential, peculiar, and distinctive Doctrines of the
Religion of Jesus, which are the Glory of Christianity.*

And, therefore, as that God is, is equally evident, from all he has either said or done, as the very light of the sun at noon; and as the all of divine revelation is thus fully clothed with divine light and evidence in every line;

There cannot possibly be any thing in the world more foolish or unreasonable, more unphilosophical or unmanly, more absurd or ridiculous, not to say impious and blasphemous, than Atheism, or the denying the being and existence of God. Or even Deism, the denying and setting aside a divine revelation, vainly boasting that reason and the light of nature are sufficient to guide men to happiness without it.

And so, of course, and by necessary consequence, an Atheist, if there be such a thing as a real Atheist in the world, he must be the very meanest and most despicable of all characters, as he denies the very first and foundation-principle of all reason, revelation, and religion, viz. that God is. And so says, that all he has either said or done is false; which the very devils believe and tremble at the truth of. Jas. ii. 19. Therefore I humbly think there can hardly be such a thing

as a real Atheist upon the earth, we are certain there can be none in hell.

And considering the necessity, the divine importance and excellency, with the divine light and evidence of a revelation from heaven, the Deist, that would set aside a divine revelation altogether, and betake himself to the dim light of nature and reason, as the only guide to heaven and happiness, must be next to him, or little better. Psa. x. 4. xiv. 1. liii. 1. Isa. viii. 20. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16. Heb. xi. 6.

Thus having already humbly endeavoured to give a short, plain, and corrected view of Bible Principles in general, or truly christian doctrines and duties, partly with that divine light and evidence with which the all of divine revelation stands cloathed, especially in the four Gospels and Acts of the apostles ;

We shall now, God willing and assisting, consider, in as few words as possible, both the following doctrines and duties, as a summary of the whole, with the offices and ordinances of Christ's own appointment in his church. And as we have already fully shewn that the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, or as both God and man in one person, is the prime constitution in all economy of God, the very first and prime elect of God. Isa. xlii. 1. Psa. lxxxix. 19, 20. Job xxxiii. 24. Acts ii. 22, 23, 24, 25, 34, 36. iv. 27, 28. 1 Pet. i. 18, 21. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23, 47, 49, 57.

So all the elect of God, from among mankind, were chosen of God the Father, or by the joint act of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as God in him, as Mediator and Saviour in the Lord Jesus Christ, from eternity before time, according to his own sovereign will and good pleasure, and for his own glory, to gospel holiness and obedience, to salvation and happiness, eternal life and everlasting salvation, in and by the Son of God alone, through the blood of sprinkling, which is the blood of Christ, the sanctification of the spirit, and the belief of the truth. Eph. i. 4, 5. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2, 9. Heb. xii. 24. 2 Tim. i. 9, 11. 1 Tim. ii. 4. Gal. iii. 16. John iii. 16. Rom. v. 15. Tit. iii. 4, 5. ii. 11, 14. 1 John v. 11, 12.

Thus

Thus the pure love, rich and free grace, and tender mercy of God, as in Christ, or the sovereign will and good pleasure of Almighty God, is the sole moving cause of election, and indeed of the all of salvation by Jesus Christ, for any sinner of mankind. John iii. 16. Rom. xi. 5, 6. Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. ii. 5, 8. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7.

Thus the pure, the holy, the absolute, and adorable sovereignty of Almighty God, stands divinely, and indeed unanswerably demonstrated to all the world, not only in this personal, particular, and eternal election in Christ, but by every word or work of God, yea, by every person or thing all over the universe of God.

Thus Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, proclaims it, Gen. xviii. 25. Job, that sage in experience, and mirror of patience, Job xxiii. 13, 14. The wise Solomon, Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 14. The apostle Paul, Rom. ix. 20. The Holy Jesus, our blessed Lord and Saviour, who knows all things, as they really are, proclaims it in living accents and divine lines. Matt. xi. 25, 26, 27. Luke x. 21, 22. xii. 31, 32.

And therefore, however many of mankind may be disposed to reject this doctrine with scorn, yet it is neither more nor less, than allowing God to be God in all he does; which he always was, is, and will be, whether we will or not. Exod. iii. 14. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Isa. xlv. 9, 10. Acts xv. 18. Deut. xxxii. 4. Eccl. iii. 14. vii. 14. And so to deny or refuse this, is virtually to deny a God, and renounce a Bible; or, in other words, to make a God like ourselves. For, says the apostle Paul, Who hath resisted his will, or being his counsellor, hath taught him? Rom. ix. 19, 20. xi. 34, 36. Isa. xl. 13, 14.

And, therefore, the all of this doctrine must be every way like and worthy of God. And election, or non-election, neither is, nor can be, the cause, either of salvation or damnation; nor does it force the will, or lay any person under the least necessity of being either good or bad.

But the all of God's eternal purpose, as well as the all of his mind and will, as revealed in his word, considers man as a rational and an intelligent creature, a reasonable being.

And so the pure love, rich grace, and tender mercy of God, as in Christ, is the sole-moving cause both of election, and the all of salvation by Jesus, as we have fully shewn already. And sin is the sole cause, the sole meritorious and procuring cause, of damnation, whether in man or evil angel.

And by the all of the doctrine of the divine decrees, as well as the all of the mind and will of God, as revealed in the word, sin, with all the punishment due to it, only does, and indeed only can lie, at the sinner's own door.

And why should it be thought unworthy in God, to purpose from eternity to punish sin as a righteous judge, either in man or angel, any more than to do it actually at the last day by his Son: And, therefore, that must be a very false and groundless, yea, a very wicked and blasphemous, aspersion, some throw upon this doctrine, as if it made God either the author or approver of sin, in any sort or shape; or as if, according to this doctrine, God had made either man or angel to damn and make them miserable. Whereas sin, with all the punishment due to it, only lies at their own door. Rom. v. 12. vi. 23. John v. 40. Matt xxiii. 37, 39. Psa. ix. 17. 2 Pet. ii. 4, 5. Jude ver. 6. Acts xvii. 31.

And God is infinitely and essentially holy, and ever God in all he does, the thrice holy Jehovah, and pure and holy sovereignty is wrote, as with the sun itself, on any creature ever God made. Rom. ix. 20, 21. Rev. iv. 8. xv. 3, 4. Hab. i. 13.

Thus, by the all of God's eternal purpose, and also the all of his divine appointment in the word, duty is always man's, as grace and events are always God's. Micah vi. 8. Eccl. ix. 10. Phil. iv. 8, 9. Jer. x. 23. Prov. xx. 24. xvi. 33. Psa. xxxvii. 23.

Accordingly, all mankind sinners, without exception or distinction, wherever the gospel of the grace of God comes and is known, are invited, called, and commanded to come to Jesus Christ, as held forth in the gospel; as at once the great and only ordinance of God to men for their salvation, that they may not perish, but have everlasting life. Prov.

viii. 4. Isa. lv. 1, 7. Matt. xi. 28, 30. 1 John iii. 23. Rev. xxii. 17.

And whosoever of mankind, Jew or Gentile, or of whatever nation under heaven, in good earnest by grace, comes to God in his Son, he is always graciously accepted of him in the beloved. John xiv. 6, 13, 14. vi. 37, 44. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi. 9, 13. Eph. i. 6.

And, therefore, let no man curiously enquire, much less unduly perplex himself, to know whether he is elected or not; for election can only be known to any sinner of mankind, by his effectual calling and conversion to Christ, and genuine Christianity, as the election of angels could only be known to them by their confirmation. 2 Pet. i. 10. 1 Tim. v. 21.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ first apprehends any sinner of mankind by his word, grace, and spirit, before that he can ever possibly apprehend him.

This the great apostle Paul proclaims all over the church of God, by the living example of himself. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended, first apprehended of Christ Jesus. Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. Rom. ix. 16.

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Redeemer of souls, reveals his holy arm, and by the power of his word, grace, and spirit, accompanying the external call of the gospel, savingly enlightens and enlivens dead, dark, and benighted souls from above, and actually creates them anew in himself, even unto good works, opening their understandings by his word and spirit, to know the holy scriptures, the truth as in Jesus, their hearts to attend in a saving manner to the things of God and of his Christ, renewing their wills and their whole man, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of God and of his Christ, giving new hearts to them, putting right spirits within them; and these being attended and followed with a new life in Christ, each of them having new light in his understanding, new life in his soul, new love in his heart and affections, new powers and faculties, new principles and springs of action, new ends and

new

new motives in action, desiring, endeavouring, and seeking daily through grace, to do all in a new manner, that is, in the name of the Lord Jesus, by his grace and spirit, according to the word of God; and so regenerated and born again, washed and sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord, and savingly and effectually called into the kingdom and glory of Christ. John vi. 63. iii. 3, 5. Eph. ii. 5, 8, 10. v. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 John iv. 7, 8, 9, 16. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rom. vi. 11. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

Thus having briefly stated both regeneration, or the new birth, and also effectual calling or conversion to Christ and Christianity, which always supposes a real and thorough conviction of sin, true illumination in the knowledge of God and of his Christ, and of the truth as in Jesus, and an effectual renovation of the whole man, and the whole life, by a new creation in Christ, or by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Matt. ix. 12. Mark ii. 17. Luke v. 31, 32. Eph. v. 8. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17. 2 Tim. i. 9.

We shall next consider the doctrine of justification before, and as in the sight of God, with which one doctrine the all of Christianity at once stands or falls; and upon union with, or in being with Christ, which union is always made up by the spirit on Christ's part, and faith on the believers; which faith is always the gift of God to, the purchase of Christ for, and the fruit and work of the good and holy spirit of God in, all that are blessed with it. John iii. 3, 5, 6, 63. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29. Gal. v. 22, 25.

Justification is an act of pure love, rich and free grace, or sovereign and tender mercy in God, as in Christ, by which he freely pardons all our iniquities, transgressions, and sins, and as graciously accepts of our persons as righteous in his sight, only for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, placed to our account, considered by God as ours, or graciously imputed to us, for the very purpose of our justification, or being declared righteous, before, and as in his sight.

Which righteousness of Christ is always known and believed in, received and rested upon, by faith; that faith which unites the soul to Christ, enthrones him in the heart,

and indeed receives a whole Christ, in his whole character as a Saviour, with the whole heart, and as the unspeakable gift of God, resting and relying upon him alone for salvation, improving him daily as a Saviour for all the purposes of life and salvation, eternal life and everlasting salvation; not only assenting to the whole word of God, and especially the all of the divine record and testimony of God concerning his own dear Son, and eternal life and everlasting salvation only in, and by him, for any sinner of mankind, as true. By an act of our understanding, upon God's own authority, speaking in the holy scriptures, but also choosing it as good, with the full consent of our wills, the whole and entire approbation of our hearts and souls, sincerely desiring, endeavouring, and seeking daily, through grace, to be conformable to it as such, in heart, in lips, in life, in all manner of conversation. Matt. iii. 15. John i. 12, 13. iii. 3, 5, 6, 29. Acts viii. 37. xiii. 38, 39. xv. 11, 16, 31. xxiv. 14, 16. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 28. v. 1, 7, 18, 19. viii. 1, 33, 34. x. 9, 10. Prov. iii. 5. Jer. xxiii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 18, 21. Gal. ii. 15, 16, 20. Eph. i. 7.

Which justification before, and as in the sight of God, consists in a change of state passed upon our persons, so that we are translated from a state of wrath, of death, and condemnation; of sin and misery, in which we are all, by nature, as in the first Adam, and as under the law as a covenant of works, to a state of grace, of favour, and friendship with God, through Christ. It is an act of God without us, it is perfect at once, and the sinner is actually justified upon believing, and only so. Rom. vi. 14. v. 8. viii. 35, 39. 1 John iv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 16. John i. 12, 13. Acts xiii. 38, 39. xvi. 31. John viii. 36.

Upon which justification, before, and as in the sight of God, every penitent believing sinner is also graciously, or by the pure, rich, and free grace or favour of Almighty God, received into the number, and blessed with all the privileges, the royal prerogatives, the rich and distinguishing privileges of the sons and children of God, through Christ. And they are not only all thus adopted into the family of God, and heirs

heirs of God, through Christ, but also blessed with the genuine temper and divine disposition of the sons and children of God, both by regeneration and adoption. 1 John iii. 1, 2. John i. 12, 13. Rom. viii. 9, 14, 17. ix. 4. Gal. iv. 4. vii. 3, 16. Eph. i. 5.

Thus regeneration, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, effectual calling or conversion by the word, grace, and spirit of God and of his Christ, justification before, and as in the sight of God, by the blood and righteousness of Christ alone, or his fulfilling all righteousness for his people, and adoption into the family of God, upon union with Christ, and saving interest in him, or only in and through him, always go together, constantly, invariably, and uniformly together.

However regeneration, conversion, and union with Christ may be considered as first in the order of nature, yet they are not so upon the whole in the order of time, but are always inseparably connected together; as the whole book of God fully shews, with the nature of the thing itself, and the experience of all saints whatever. 1 Cor. vi. 11, 17. John i. 12, 13. Rom. viii. 29, 30.

Sanctification is a work of grace within us, of special, supernatural, and saving grace, whereby we are renewed in our whole man, after the image of God and of his Christ, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, all sin, and live unto righteousness, and walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Thus this work of grace, begun in regeneration and effectual calling, is carried on by degrees unto perfection at death, in the progressive work of true gospel sanctification, or holiness in heart, in lip and life, in all manner of conversation.

The sole foundation and principle of all true gospel sanctification, or holiness in any sinner of mankind, is union with Christ, with that reign of light, love, and life, by the power of the word, grace, and spirit of Christ, in all believing hearts and souls, over their lips and lives, yea, over the whole man, with the whole life and conversation in the world, which the Son of God, as a living and life-giving head, always maintains in all real saints and sincere Christi-
ans

ans whatever. John xv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11. xvii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. vii. 1. xii. 9, 10. Acts xx. 32. Rom. vi. 4, 14. Eph. v. 24, 27. iii. 16, 21. Gal. v. 22, 25. Phil. iii. 10. iv. 19. Col. i. 9, 10, 14. 2 Theff. ii. 13, 14. 1 Theff. iv. 3.

Which sanctification, or true gospel holiness, extends to the whole man, the whole soul, with all its powers and faculties, the body, with all its members, as instruments of righteousness unto holiness, and also the whole life and conversation in the world, and still is but imperfect in this life in any part; insomuch, that there is a constant, a continued warfare between flesh and spirit, grace and corruption, the old man in Adam, or that body of sin and death that cleaves to the holiest man living; and the new man, or new nature in Christ, that all in real union and of one spirit with the Son of God, are blessed with. For he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit with him.

And if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is as yet none of his. 1 Cor. vi. 17. Rom. viii. 9, 14.

Thus real union with, and saving interest in, the Lord Jesus Christ---Christ living and reigning, dwelling and abiding, in all real saints and sincere Christians, with the office and agency of the Holy Ghost, the nature of the covenant of grace, which is an absolute promise, I will be your God, viz in Christ, in covenant, and ye shall be my people; the all-perfect satisfaction, and all-powerful and ever-prevalent mediation and intercession of Christ, with the continued supplies of his grace and spirit, or the light, love, and life of Christ, with the power of his grace and spirit, wherever they are, effectually secure gospel holiness and sanctification, or the all of christian obedience, and perseverance in saints unto the end of their life, and nothing else in God's universe can effectually secure these in the least instance. 2 Theff. v. 23. Phil. i. 6. iii. 12, 14. Col. i. 27. 1 Pet. i. 3, 9. ii. 11. 2 Pet. i. 5, 11. Rom. vii. 14, 25. viii. 13. John x. 27, 29. 1 John iii. 9. Gal. v. 17. Rom. vi. 11, 14. viii. 31, 39. Jer. xxxi. 3. Heb. vii. 25, 26. ix. 24. viii. 10, 11.

Thus all real saints and sincere Christians always were, are, and ever will be, sincere students of universal holiness.

None

None of them ever attained to an absolute perfection, or a sinless holiness in this life or world, nor indeed so much as dreamed of it here; as the whole book of God fully shews every body. But they are all while here, by all means, pressing towards it, and at death are made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory. 1 John i. 3, 9. 1 Pet. i. 15, 23. ii. 5, 9. iii. 15. Phil. iii. 8, 14. Tit. ii. 11, 14. iii. 4, 8. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Thess. v. 23. Luke xxiii. 43. Rev. xiv. 13.

Thus all such as are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, adopted into the family of God, and washed and sanctified by his word and spirit, are in some measure blest with a sense, if not assurance, of God's love as in Christ, peace of conscience by the peace-speaking blood of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance there unto the end. Rom. v. 1, 5, 14, 17. Prov. iv. 18. 1 John v. 10, 13. 1 Pet. i. 3, 9. And at death they are all eternally glorified. The departing spirits of dying saints are no sooner separated from their bodies, than they are immediately presented by the Lord Jesus Christ, before the presence of the Father's glory, with exceeding joy. Their bodies, though laid in their graves, and reduced to dust there, remain there in real union with the Son of God, real parts, and actual members of his body mystical, and will be raised up at the last day, each of them like unto Christ's most glorious body, and so re-united to their glorified spirits, and constitute the same identical individual persons, as here, and be all openly acknowledged and acquitted by him in judgment, and so be for ever with the Lord in his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at his right-hand, where there are rivers of divine pleasures for evermore. Where they will be as happy in the immediate vision, the full, the final, and eternal fruition of God and of his Christ, as their very natures are capable of, to endless ages. Luke xxiii. 43. Rev. xiv. 13, 21, 22, 23. Matt. xxv. 34. Psa. xvi. 11, 73. xxiii. 26. Isa. lvii. 1, 2. xxvi. 1, 4. Rom. ii. 6, 7, 10, 11. Acts xvii. 31. Phil. iii. 20. 1 Thess. iv. 17. 2 Thess. i. 7, 10.

And as to all others of mankind that have lived and died out of Christ unjustified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
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unwashed and un sanctified by the word and spirit of the Lord, there is but one law published concerning them all over the holy scriptures, they must perish eternally. Psa. lxxiii. 27. ix. 17. Isa. xlviii. 22.

For the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven at the last day, as Lord Judge of the world, with his mighty angels, as in flaming fire, taking vengeance, eternal vengeance on all them that know not God, nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Theff. i. 7, 10. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Rom. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Matt. xxv. 41. Psa. ix. 17. xi. 6. Acts xvii. 31.

DISSERTATION II.

Upon the Duties of Christianity, upon Gospel Principles.

Thus having finished all we intended upon the doctrines of Christianity, and also the evidence, we shall now endeavour very briefly to consider the duties.

And in general the all of christian duty consists in obedience to the mind and will of God, as revealed in the word of his grace.

In obedience and conformity to Christ and the gospel, as one continued law of love and life in Christ Jesus the Lord, and also in obedience to the law, the moral law, the law of the ten commandments, as a rule of life, as in the hands of Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Saviour.

In one word, in the obedience of faith and love, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the spirit, according to the word of God. Rom. xii. 1. ii. 16, 25, 27. viii. 9, 14. xiv. 23. Hab. ii. 4. Heb. xi. 6. Matt. xxii. 37, 40. xxiii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Jas. iv. 12. John xiv. 15. xv. 14. Micah vi. 8. 1 Sam. xv. 22. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15. Col. iii. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Eph. v. 1, 2.

Or, in general, the all of Christian duty, upon these principles, consists in all the acts of piety, worship, and devotion towards God and his Christ, and in all the acts of temper-

ance,

ance, chastity, frugality, and personal holiness, or duty, with respect to ourselves, and also of love and friendship, justice and equity, with every relative and social duty, with respect to all others of mankind, whether saints or sinners, and all from the saving knowledge of, true faith in, and sincere and fervent love to Jesus Christ, and God as in him. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. iii. 4, 7. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15. Phil. iv. 6, 9. Micah vi. 8. 1 Sam. xv. 22. John xiv. 15. xv. 14. xiii. 35. Matt. xi. 28, 30. xxii. 37, 40. 1 John v. 3. iii. 14.

But more particularly, obedience to the Son of God, or the all of christian duty, supposes, in the first place, the saving knowledge of God and of his Christ, and of the truth as in Jesus. Such a knowledge of Christ and the gospel, or of God, as in Christ, and of ourselves, of sin, and duty, by and according to the word of God, as opens the understanding to know the holy scriptures, and the heart seriously to attend to the things of God and of his Christ, and the salvation of the precious and immortal soul; such a knowledge, as not only enlightens the head, but is truly humbling, heart-sanctifying, soul-renewing, and life-reforming, and is both practical and experimental. John xvii. 3, 13, 17. Psa. ix. 10. Matt. vii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. iii. 5.

True faith in Christ, and true evangelical repentance, are also both special and saving graces, and great and indispensable christian duties; and such a knowledge as we have already mentioned, cannot be without both these.

Faith is a special, supernatural, and saving grace, implanted in the heart and soul of any sinner of mankind, by the word and spirit of the Lord, as the gift of God to, the purchase of Christ for, and the fruit and work of the good and holy spirit of God in, all that are blest with it.

It always unites the soul to Christ, and enthrones him in the very heart; that is first apprehended, in a saving manner, by the word, grace, power, and spirit of Christ, insomuch, that this faith, wherever it is, is always a self-emptying, a soul-humbling, and saving grace; a Christ-magnifying and God-glorifying grace; and it never fails to engage the person that is blessed with it, fully to assent to the whole word of God as true, by an act of his understanding, upon God's

own authority, speaking in the holy scriptures, and also to chuse it as good, with the full consent of the will, the whole and entire approbation of the heart and soul, and particularly this faith, always receives a whole Christ, in his whole character, as a Saviour, as Prophet, Priest, and King, with his whole heart, renouncing every other lord and lover for his sake, as the unspeakable gift of God, resting and relying upon him alone for salvation, looking for acceptance with God the Father, either for his person or services, only for his sake; seeking daily, through grace, to improve the Son of God as a Saviour, for all the purposes of life and salvation, living by faith on the Son of God, and walking in the love and fear of God, and so adorning the doctrines of God his Saviour in all things, by life and conversation in the world, becoming the gospel of Christ.

For true faith, wherever it is, is always a constant, a vigorous, and active principle, productive of the all of true gospel holiness, or real christian obedience.

For as the body of a man, without the spirit, is dead, so faith, without good works, is dead also.

And that profession of religion that is not attended and followed with a true gospel conversation, is both unpleasing to God, and unprofitable to men. John i. 12, 13. iii. 35. vi. 29. Prov. iii. 5. Jer. xxiii. 6. Matt. iii. 15. Isa. xxvi. 1, 4. Acts. viii. 37. xiii. 38, 39. xv. 11. xvi. 31. xxiv. 14, 16. Rom. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 28. v. 1, 17, 18, 19. viii. 1, 33, 34. x. 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15. Gal. ii. 15, 16, 20. James i. 22. ii. 19. Matt. vii. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

Repentance towards God always attends and follows upon true faith in Christ. Repentance unto life, or true and evangelical repentance, from a due sight and sense of sin, all sin, and a believing apprehension of the mercy of God as in Christ, turning from all sin and iniquity to God as in Christ, with full purpose of heart and soul, and sincere endeavours after new obedience.

Having a heart truly broken and contrite for, and broken off from all sin, and cleaving unto the Lord Christ, with full purpose of heart and soul, through grace; which repentance
consists

consists in a change of mind, and disposition of heart and life, or in a new heart, a right spirit, followed with a new life in Christ, which cannot be without saving knowledge, true faith, and a new creation in Christ.

And, therefore, repentance unto life, or true gospel repentance, (without which there is no salvation for any sinner of mankind) must be both the gift of God to, and the fruit and work of the good and holy spirit of God in, all that are blessed with it, as well as saving faith. Acts xi. 18, 22, 23, 24. iii. 19. v. 31. xvii. 30. xxvi. 18, 20. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Matt. iii. 2. iv. 17. Mark i. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 25. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Love, divine redeeming love, shed abroad in the heart, and reigning in the soul by the Holy Ghost, carried to perfection, is the highest act either of reason or religion; and love, the love of God as in Christ, is not only the great, the leading, but the universal law in the kingdom of Christ; yea, every law in his kingdom is just one continued law of love; and so the all of his religion is just love, peace, truth, holiness, or obedience, and conformity to Christ and the gospel, or conformity to God and his Christ, in every thing imitable. And, therefore, to know and to believe God's love as in Christ, to live and walk in it, to dwell, abide, and abound in it, continually loving Jesus Christ, and God as in him, with all our hearts, souls, strength, and might, with a supreme and superlative love, above all persons and things; and as the native fruit and genuine effect of this love reigning in the soul, loving all saints with a pure heart fervently, and breathing affection, love, and good-will towards all mankind; endeavouring to love as God loves, loving every person or thing that is God-like and Christ-like, for God and Christ's sake, is a truly great, delightful, and divinely important christian duty, and always attends, in some measure, the saving knowledge of, and true faith in Christ, or true gospel repentance before God. And indeed there is no religion in any soul of mankind without it; (1 Cor. xiii. chap. at large) yea, it is the very sum and substance of the religion of Jesus.

And so in the very same proportion, as any person is blest with the spirit and power of the religion of the Son of God in general, he will always abound in this love of God and of his Christ in particular. Matt. xxii. 37, 40. 1 John iv. 7, 16. iii. 14. John xiv. 15. xv. 14. xiii. 35. Eph. iii. 16, 19. v. 1. 2 Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15.

To lead a new life in Christ, is another great and christian duty, doing all in the name, and by the word, spirit, and power of the Lord Jesus, not only living by faith on the Son of God, and walking in the love of God, in a constant and an entire subjection to, and dependence upon, him, by faith, by promise, praying in the Holy Ghost, but walking in newness of life, in all manner of conversation in the world, living before God the Father, in the hands of his dear Son, casting all our care ever upon him, living above this world while in it, and under the powers of that world which is to come, while we live in this, laying up our treasure in heaven, and carrying on a conversation there; having the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeping our hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus the Lord, daily and duly exercising all the different gifts and graces of the good and holy spirit of God, as knowledge, faith, love, humility, meekness, and godly fear, joy and peace in believing, hope by the power of the Holy Ghost, and faithfully and conscientiously practising all christian duties, whether towards God or man, our neighbour, or ourselves, in the Lord. Rom. vi. 4, 11, 14. Tit. vii. 6. Tit. ii. 11, 14. Gal. v. 22, 25. Phil. iv. 6, 9. 2 Pet. i. 5, 11. Col. i. 27. John xv. 8.

True christian prayer is another great christian duty, to be daily practised by all Christians come to the years of knowledge and discretion.

Prayer is a lifting up of our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens, or a pouring out of our souls, with all our desires, before God the Father, in the hands of his dear Son, by his spirit, for whatever is agreeable to his will, as revealed in the word; with the humble confession of all our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of all God's mercies.

Thus our blessed Lord and Saviour taught his apostles and disciples in this very manner to pray, not that they were al-

ways

ways to use the same words, or any set or form of words invariably whatever; but after this manner, according to this divine pattern or exalted model of true Christian prayer; saying, Our Father which art in heaven, our God, our Father in Christ; hallowed, or sanctified, be thy name; thy kingdom come, both in grace here and glory hereafter; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread, or whatever infinite wisdom and goodness sees best for us in this life and world; forgive us our sins, or debts, viz. for Christ's sake, as we forgive our debtors, or them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, or trial, or let us not be led into it; but deliver us from evil, especially from sin, the greatest evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. *Amen.* Matt. vi. 9, 15. Luke xi. 1, 4.

Thus let any person examine the matter, and he will see our blessed Lord does not use all the same words in Luke he does in Matthew; which may teach us and all the world that it was in this manner, or according to this example of prayer, and not according to this, or indeed any set form of words whatever, that Christians were always only to pray.

Thus not only this glorious and divine prayer, but the whole word of God is designed of God to direct us to pray, and is indeed God's prayer-book put into the hands of all Christians, to teach them to pray, as well as how to live, die, or walk; please God, through Christ, whether in life or death.

Thus the intercessory prayer of our blessed Lord and Saviour, in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel, is exactly according to the mind and will of God as revealed in the word. The prayer of the Jewish high-priest, in a continued succession, recorded Numbers chap. vi. 22, 27; the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, 2 Chr. vi; with indeed all the prayers recorded in the word of God, whether offered unto God by prophets or apostles, or any of the saints and people of God, they were always made in the name of Christ, by the Spirit, according to the word of God.

Thus the gift of prayer consists in being able to express ourselves

ourselves in all the different parts of prayer, as adoration, confession, petition, and thanksgiving, in a manner, and with words and sentiments agreeable to the holy scriptures.

But the grace of prayer, or praying to God with acceptance, consists in praying not only with our mouths and understandings, with proper words and sentiments, or even with a book, if we cannot pray without it; but also with grace in our hearts, as well as with knowledge in our heads; in sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of heart and soul; in faith and love, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, according to the holy scriptures; with genuine piety, holy fervency, ardour, and earnestness; and with sublime and exalted devotion: Or, in one word, in the name of Christ, and in the due exercise of the different gifts and graces of the Spirit, by and according to the word of God.

Thus Christians are to pray frequently and fervently, statedly and regularly; in secret in their closets, in private in their families, and publicly in the sanctuary; and always endeavour to maintain a praying temper, frame, and disposition of mind, as such praying is always the delight as well as duty of all real saints and sincere Christians. Luke xi. 1, 2. xviii. 1, 2. vii. 26, 36. Matt. xxvi. 41. Phil. iv. 6, 7. 1 Thess. v. 17, 18. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3, 8. Mark xi. 24. John xiv. 13, 14. James i. 5, 6. v. 13, 14, 15. Col. iii. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Gal. vi. 16.

Reading the holy scriptures; hearing the word of God preached; meditation upon what we read, hear, or know of the things of God and of his Christ; self-examination by and according to the word of God; partaking of the holy ordinance of our Lord's Supper, as we were all baptized in our infancy; daily blessing and praising God and his Christ, are also all great christian duties, to be daily practised, diligently, faithfully, and conscientiously performed by all Christians; and that in the name, according to the word, and by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. John v. 39. Heb. x. 25. Psal. i. 1, 2. cxix. 97. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23, 26. Col. iii. 14, 15, 16, 17. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Phil. iv. 6, 7, 8, 9. 2 Pet. i. 5, 11.

Sabbath

Sabbath sanctification is another truly great and divinely important christian duty. The institution of a sabbath is both a wise and gracious institution of God. The sabbath is a day, by divine appointment, set apart for God and religion; for the business of the soul, and another and an eternal world, while we live in this; inasmuch, that all that know God and his Christ, and have religion before God in the least degree, will regard the sabbath, and sincerely desire to sanctify and keep it holy. And therefore nothing but the want of religion altogether, in its spirit and power, can occasion the wilful, the open neglect, or the avowed profanation of the sabbath by any of mankind. Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3. Exod. xx. 8, 9, 10, 11. Levit. xix. 30. Isa. lvi. 1, 6. lviii. 13, 14. Num. xv. 32, 36. Rev. i. 10.

Thus, in few words, all Christians, by all they owe to God and his Christ, ought to rejoice not only to profess, but also daily to live to Christ; adorning the doctrines of God their Saviour in all things, by a life and conversation becoming the gospel. The glory of God, the honour of a Redeemer, and the praise of free grace, being constantly, invariably, and uniformly their great and last end in life, in the all of life; and next to, and in subordination to that, seeking daily, by all means, to promote their own holiness and happiness, and that of others; endeavouring daily to make conscience before God of the all of christian or commanded duty. Phil. i. 21. iv. 6, 9. Rom. xiv. 8. 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. i. 27. Tit. ii. 11, 14. iii. 4, 7. John xiv. 15. xv. 5, 8, 14. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15.

DISSERTATION III.

Upon the Offices and Ordinances of Christ's own Appointment in his Church.

THUS having given a summary view of christian duties upon gospel principles, it remains to consider the offices and ordinances of Christ's own appointment in his church: And

as the Lord Jesus Christ is the one Lawgiver in his church, and to the universe; and a perfect Lawgiver, and the sole Lord of the consciences of all men; being at once possessed of all power and authority, might, and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth. James iv. 12. Psal. ii. 6. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Acts iii. 22, 23. Matt. xxiii. 8, 12. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. Rom. ix. 19, 20. xi. 34, 36. Dan. iv. 35. v. 21. So, as the sole head, both of influences to, and of government in and over his own church, and as head also over all things to his church, he has graciously instituted and appointed a gospel ministry to continue in his church to the end of time, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, or all real saints and sincere Christians whatever, even all the saints and people of God to a man, until we all come, all Christians indeed, saith the apostle Paul, in the unity, or into the unity and Oneness of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man in Christ, unto the measure of the stature or age of the fulness of Christ; that is, until all the saints and people of God are made perfect in holiness, and conformity to Christ and the gospel at death; and so all meet for the glorious inheritance of the saints in light, life, and glory. Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 31. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6, 7. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Tit. i. 5. Acts vi. chap. at large. Matt. ix. 37, 38. Luke x. 2.

Thus, after the apostles and evangelists, who were all extraordinary office-bearers in the church of God, and had no successors in office, except Judas the traitor, with the seventy disciples he sent forth by two and two, all immediately called and supernaturally qualified by him for their office, he gave pastors and teachers, ordinary office-bearers, to continue in the church to the end of time; or, he instituted and appointed true gospel ministers, real christian bishops, or servants of God in the gospel of his Son, to preach the word of God daily and duly, administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, faithfully to feed and rule the flock of Christ, while sun and moon should endure. He also graciously gave helps or governments in his church,

or

or instituted and appointed elders and deacons to assist gospel ministers in ruling and governing his church, and that the poor also might be taken care of, according to the royal law of Christ. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. ix. 37, 38. Luke x. 2. Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 30, 1 Tim. iii. 1, 10. iv. 14. v. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5, 9. Acts vi. at large. Phil. i. 1, 2.

Accordingly these are the only offices, or office-bearers, of divine institution and appointment in all the New Testament. All the world cannot shew another.

The institution of a christian man, published by the reformers, and approven of by both houses of parliament, fully shews that this was the judgment of many in England at the reformation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only-law-giver in his church or to the world; and he is a perfect law-giver, and so the sole, the one and only Lord spiritual, or Lord of the consciences of men, of all men, whether saints or sinners upon the face of the earth, yea, all over the universe. Jas. iv. 12. Matt. xxiii. 8. xii. 28. xviii. 19, 20. Eph. i. 19, 23. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10. Psa. ii. 6. lxvi. 7. cx. 1, 2, 3. ciii. 19. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Acts iii. 22, 23. Rom. ix. 19, 20. xi. 34, 35, 36. Dan. iv. 35.

Thus the divinely amiable and altogether lovely Jesus, by all the authority of heaven, expressly forbids all spiritual lordship, or lordly dominion in his church, or over the consciences of men, to any man, or set of men, upon the face of God's earth. Matt. xx. 20, 28. xxiii. 8, 12. Mark x. 42, 45. Luke xxii. 24, 27.

And all the apostles of Christ to a man, as both knowing the mind, and breathing the spirit of Christ, their dear Lord and Saviour, their one and only Lord and Master, absolutely disclaim any such thing with scorn, yea, reject the very thought of it with a humble but holy disdain, with sovereign contempt. 1 Pet. v. 3. 2 Cor. v. 11. Gal. i. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 10, 15.

And, therefore, who, or whatever hath, made as many spiritual lordships in the visible church of God, it is evident, as the very light of the sun at noon, from the whole New Testament, and from the uniform practice of the apostles

and first Christians, all over the church of Christ, the Son of God, the Lord of the harvest, never made one of them. Matt. ix. 37, 38. xx. 25, 28. xxiii. 8, 12. Mark x. 42, 45. Luke xxii. 24, 27. Acts xv. 25, 29. xx. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 1, 7. iv. 14, 16. v. 17. Tit. i. 5, 9. Rom. x. 15. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 7, 11.

Thus a presbyter, or christian bishop, that is a true gospel minister, or real servant of God in the gospel of his Son, are all terms synonymous, or words of the same import and signification, throughout the whole New Testament, always denoting the same office, as applied to preachers of Christ and the everlasting gospel; insomuch, that the apostles of Christ condescend to stile themselves Presbyters, no doubt for the instruction of the whole church of God. 1 Pet. v. 1, 4. 2 Epistle of John i. 1. 3 Epistle i. 1. Acts xx. 17, 28. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 17, 18, 19. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5, 9. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 11.

The power of licensing or ordaining true gospel ministers, is by the appointment of the Son of God, invested in such and such only, as are already by office ministers of Christ and the gospel. And they have power, right, or authority to licence or ordain only such as, upon trial, appear to them to be properly called and qualified, and inwardly disposed by the grace and spirit of Christ, as far as they can judge, according to the word of God, for that sacred and divine office; yea, men in office, or already gospel ministers, according to the word of God, can only ordain, or set apart ruling elders or deacons, for the better government of the church of God.

And, therefore, no man, let his qualifications, real or imaginary, be what they will, is to take this sacred office of a gospel minister upon himself, or up at his own hand; but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, for even Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. Heb. v. 4, 5, 6. Rom. x. 15.

An ordination of ministers of Christ, which is always to be done by prayer and imposition of hands by gospel ministers, it does not appear, from the whole New Testament, that

that ever it is to be done by one person only ; for no man can so much as suppose, with the least shadow either of truth or reason, that the apostle Paul would enjoin Timothy or Titus, both evangelists, or indeed any other person, to licence or ordain otherwise than he did himself, which was by prayer, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 17, 22. iii. 1, 13. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5, 9. Rom. x. 15, 28. xviii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 30. Eph. iv. 11, 13. Acts vi. chap. at large.

Thus prelacy, or diocesan episcopacy, with popery, has been long in the visible church and world, by God's permission, but never by the Divine appointment, nor with the approbation of Almighty God ; as the above passages of holy scripture, with many others, fully shew. Isa. viii. 20. Matt. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7, 8, 9. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 15. Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, 18, 23. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Pet. i. 19, 20, 21. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 12. Rev. xvii. 5, 18. xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 21.

Thus the humble Presbyter, or truly christian bishop, are one and the same person, office, and character, all over the New Testament. And it would appear evident, from the all of the history of the church of Christ, the primitive church impartially considered, that this was the sense, the uniform sense of Christians of this matter, all over the church of God, for at least one hundred and forty years after the birth of Christ.

However, some men, playing upon both the name and office of a bishop, would make out a list of lordly prelates in a manner from the humble and holy apostles of Christ ; but this they have all found an impossible task, as the works of true gospel ministers, or real christian bishops, still preserved in God's good providence, fully shew ; as Polycarp's epistle to the Phillipians, Clement's to the Corinthians, Jerom on Titus i. 15, with many other respectable and venerable characters in the early ages of Christianity.

But still this human invention of lordly prelacy, for all the world cannot shew the least shadow of a divine institution for it, either from Christ or his apostles, begun through pride and worldly ambition, and with craft and wicked po

licy, to raise its head in two or three great cities above the waters of the sanctuary; and several congregations of Christians, ministers, and people, were brought to submit to one bishop, as their prelate or diocesan; it would appear from history, about the year of Christ two hundred and sixty, yea, in different instances, it was established by blood and slaughter. Whereas, from the beginning, or rather the establishment of Christianity in the world, it was not so; but every true gospel minister, or real christian bishop, had ordinarily only one society or congregation of Christians, to whom he daily preached God's word, and administered Christ's sacrament, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and exercised true christian discipline among them, according to the holy scriptures.

Thus a kind of lordly prelacy served to introduce the great antichrist, the man of sin, and son of perdition into his papal throne, seated upon many waters, (that is people and nations says an apostle of Christ) which accordingly took place at Rome in Sylvester the first Pope, and the prelate of all prelates, in the year of Christ three hundred and thirteen, January first at latest; as the dates of time in general in the church of Rome, from the first indiction of Sylvester the first, shew all the world to this day.

Thus prelacy, in respect of age, is rather the mother than the daughter of popery; and as they are so much alike, however different, and neither of them can have the least pretence to a divine original; and the former is so closely connected with the latter, (being an essential part of it) to this day, all the world knows.

One should think, when he looks seriously and devoutly into the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as they arose in the visible church of God so nearly together, and are so much of a piece upon the whole, so in God's good time and way, which is always the best and fittest, they must either stand or fall together. Matt. v. 18. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7, 9. Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, 15, 23. Psa. ii. 6. cx. 1, 2, 3. Acts iii. 22, 23. Num. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29.

Thus

Thus having fully shewn from the New Testament at large, that the presbyter, or real christian bishop, or true gospel minister, and the ruling elder or deacon, are all the offices and office-bearers of Christ's own appointment in his church, we shall next consider his ordinances. And the external ordinances of Christ in his church are few and well ordained. Reading the holy scriptures is one; a truly wise and gracious institution of God; a command of pure love in the Lord Jesus Christ, enjoined upon all mankind wherever the book of God comes and is known. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. John v. 39. Reading the holy scriptures with sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of heart and soul; earnestly desiring to know and embrace the truths of God, the truth as in Jesus, and that alone. Reading with true christian humility, genuine piety, heavenly devotion, in faith and love, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, impartially comparing scripture with scripture.

Thus not only with all christian diligence, and by faith and prayer, daily perusing the word of God as God's word, and the one and only word of eternal life and everlasting salvation, through Christ, for any sinner of mankind; as the one and only rule, and indeed a perfect rule, both of faith and manners to all Christians; but as sincerely and diligently desiring, endeavouring, and seeking daily, through grace, to reduce to practice all we know, and be conformable to it as such, in heart, in lip, and life; in all manner of conversation in the world.

Thus daily to search, read, and peruse the word of God, is not only the duty and privilege, but the honour, the interest, the joy, and delight of all real saints and sincere Christians whatever, come to the years of knowledge and discretion; the joy and rejoicing of their hearts; their songs in this the house of their pilgrimage; their meditation and comfort day and night; a constant light to their feet, and lamp to their path, through life and death; and esteemed by the least of saints a treasure incomparably more excellent than all the gold of the Indies: Infomuch, that
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any person that has a God, as in Christ, and so a Bible as his own, through Christ, to go to, can never be placed in such circumstances, whether in life or death, as he can be greatly to pity. And otherwise, all this world never did, nor possibly can, make any soul happy. John v. 39. vii. 17. xiii. 17. Matt. v. 15, 19. vii. 21. Luke viii. 21. Acts xvii. 11. xxiv. 14, 15, 16. 1 Theff. ii. 10, 13. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. Deut. vi. 4. ix. 11, 18, 25. Gen xviii. 19. Joshua xxiv. 15. Psal. i. 2, 3. cxix. 5, 6, 24, 54, 97, 105. Isa. xxvi. 1, 4. Jer. xv. 16. Hab. iii. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 4, 7. Matt. xiii. 44, 46. 2 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 16.

Hearing the word of God, both law and gospel, daily preached, that is, as often as we have opportunity, is another wise and gracious institution of God and his Christ, enjoined in infinite wisdom and grace, and by all the authority of heaven, upon all mankind, wherever the gospel of the grace of God comes and is known. Hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David; that is, I will be your God in Christ, in covenant, the new, the everlasting, and well-ordered covenant: For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, faith God himself. Isa. lv. 3. Rom. x. 17. Acts xxvi. 18. John vi. 63.

Hearing the word of God with due diligence, preparation, and prayer, in faith and love, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, and in the proper exercise of the different gifts and graces of the good and holy Spirit of God; receiving the truth as in Jesus, not as the word of man, but as it is in very deed the word of the living God, which ever effectually works, and produces all the fruits of righteousness, or true gospel holiness, in all that do indeed believe. Acts ii. 37, 42. iv. 4, 16. xiv. 36, 31. vii. 11. xxvi. 18. Rom. x. 9, 10, 14, 17. i. 16, 17. iii. 21, 26. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. v. 18, 21. Heb. iv. 2. Luke xxiv. 45. James i. 25. Prov. ii. 1, 9. Psal. cxix. 11, 16. Luke viii. 15.

The Son of God, in infinite wisdom and grace, has instituted and appointed a gospel ministry to continue in his church

church to the end of time, as we have fully shewn already : he hath put this treasure of the gospel in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might appear to every one to be of God, and not of men. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 7. He appointed men, chosen of God, fitted and prepared by Providence, called by his word, grace, and spirit ; inclined and disposed by the grace of God, and properly qualified by him, and also set apart for that sacred and divinely important office of gospel ministers, by men in office, as ministers of Christ ; and likewise called by the church to particular societies, or congregations of Christians, to preach the gospel, rightly dividing the word of truth, and faithfully declaring the whole counsel of God to them ; and to dispense the sacraments of Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, amongst them, and all the parts of true christian discipline, according to the word of God, and the example of the apostles and first Christians recorded there, whether in their own congregations as Christians, or in larger or lesser circles or classes of Christians, as presbyters, public meetings of ministers, with ruling elders or deacons, as synods or assemblies, as the circumstances of different churches of Christ may make necessary. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. ix. 36, 38. Eph. iv. 11, 13. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 30. Luke x. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 17, 22. iii. 1, 13. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5, 9. Acts vi. at large. xv. 6, 29. xx. 17, 28. Isa. ix. 6, 7. 1 Theff. v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 7, 8, 17, 24. Matt. xvi. 16, 19. xviii. 15, 18. John xx. 19, 23. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 8.

Thus, in as few words as possible, by the divine institution and appointment of Almighty God, by all the authority of heaven, all Christians are daily to worship and wait upon God in the Son of his love, in all the institutions of his grace under the gospel, as in all the secret devotions of the closet, the private duties of the family, and public duties of the sanctuary. They are constantly to worship and adore, bless, praise, and magnify, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons in one Godhead, in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit, according to the word of God ; to pray to him in the same manner as described above, in secret by themselves, in private with their families,

families, and publicly in the house of God; daily, statedly, and regularly, or so often as they can have opportunity: They are particularly to remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy, spending the whole day in real acts of piety, worship, and devotion, or in the genuine exercises of pure and undefiled religion, excepting so much as is to be taken up in acts of real necessity, or works of pure mercy: By faith in Christ, through the Holy Ghost, entering into the gracious and special presence and enjoyment of God, as in Christ, in all holy duties, and so in very deed having their fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ: Partaking of the holy ordinance of the Supper as we have opportunity, and so shewing forth the Lord's death till he come; and frequently renewing our baptismal vows and engagements to be the Lord's; for ever since God had a church upon earth, children were always church members: Being diligent, faithful, and conscientious through grace, in the all of commanded duty; devoting ourselves, with all our services, all we are, have, or can do, to God the Father, in the hands of his dear Son, as a spiritual sacrifice, living, holy, and acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ, thus to be his only, wholly, and for ever. Deut. vi. 4, 5, 13. x. 20. Exod. xx. 8. Psal. xcv. 6, 7. xcix. 5, 6, 9. Gen. xviii. 19. Psal. lxxxiv. 8, 12. Isa. lvi. 4, 7. lviii. 13, 14. Micah iv. 5. Col. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 9, 14. 1 Cor. xii. 3. xi. 23, 26. John iv. 23, 24. Matt. vi. 6. xxvi. 41. 1 Theff. v. 16, 17, 18. 1 John i. 1, 3. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. Rom. xii. 1, 2. Phil. iv. 8, 9.

DISSERTATION IV.

How and why these are to be embraced and held fast by all Christians.

THUS having given a summary view of Bible principles, or truly christian doctrines and duties, with that divine light and evidence with which these stand clothed all over the holy

holy scriptures, and also some account of the offices and ordinances of Christ's own appointment in his church, setting all the inventions and institutions of men in the matters of God and religion whatever for ever aside; as our blessed Lord and Saviour himself does, while he in person in the flesh, and also by his Spirit in his apostles, in the fullest, the most express, and peremptory manner. Matt. xv. 9, 20, 25, 28. Mark vii. 7, 9. Luke xxii. 24, 27. Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, 18, 23. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 10, 15. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3. We shall now, by necessary consequence, native conclusion, or infallible inference from all these, shew what Christianity, the religion of the Son of God, is and does, wherever any person, any sinner of mankind, is blest with that religion in its genuine spirit and divine power. And in few words, it is all over, and in every line, a religion of love, peace, truth, holiness, or obedience and conformity to Christ and the gospel. Love is not only the great, the leading, but the universal law in the kingdom of Christ; yea, every law in his kingdom, from beginning to end, is just one continued law of love. And all such of mankind as by grace know and believe God's love as in Christ, and so are in real union and of one spirit with the Son of God; justified before God by his blood and righteousness, and sanctified by his word, grace, and spirit, as all saints indeed are. They all love Jesus Christ, and God as in him, with all their hearts, souls, strength, and might; with a supreme and a superlative love, above all persons and things: And as the native fruit and genuine effect of this love, shed abroad in their hearts, and reigning in their souls by the word and spirit of the Lord, they love all saints with a pure heart fervently, and ever breathe affection, love, and good-will towards all mankind.

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeps their hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus the Lord. And this religion of Jesus is all eternal truth, clothed with every attribute and perfection of the divine nature, as manifested in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and all sealed, ratified, and confirmed by his blood. And the whole of Christianity, or of this religion of the Son of God, is just God-

likeness and Christ-likeness, and designed of God to make all real Christians holy and happy, God-like and Christ-like: Insomuch, that the conversion of any sinner of mankind is a new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord, even unto good works. The sinner so converted is always a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. A new heart is always given to any man in Christ, in real union and of one spirit with him, and a right spirit is always put within him; and that is always attended and followed with a new life in Christ.

And hence regeneration, with the all of the progressive work of true gospel sanctification, is the very best evidence of justification, or any man's being in a state of grace. Rom. viii. 9, 14. vi. 11, 14. xiii. 10. Gal. v. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. chap. at large. Matt. xxii. 36, 40. Eph. ii. 10. v. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15, 17. 1 John iv. 7, 16.

But this brings us, according to method, to shew how and why these Bible Principles, or truly christian doctrines, are to be embraced and held fast; and all christian duties are also to be practised upon these principles by all Christians. And as to the manner how, it is to be with knowledge and understanding; with sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of heart and soul; with true gospel sincerity, which consists in a heart right with God, and established by his grace in Christ. Hosea iv. 6. Prov. ix. 10. 1 Chron. xxix. 17. Luke xxiv. 45. Heb. xiii. 9.

It is to be in faith and love, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, and in the due exercise of the different gifts and graces of the good and holy Spirit of God; as not only with knowledge and understanding, true faith in Christ, and ardent love, and in the strength and by the power and spirit of the Lord Jesus; but with genuine piety; holy, well-tempered zeal; true Christian humility, courage, fortitude, and resolution; with perseverance therein to the end of our life; or, in one word, with true christian and exalted heroism for the love and sake of Jesus, for the glory of God, the honour of a Redeemer, and the praise of free grace, as our great and last end; and next to and in subordination to that, to promote our own holiness and happiness,

pinefs, and that of others; doing all in the name, and by the word, fpirit, and power of the Lord Jefus Chrift. Heb. xi. 6. Afts xxiv. 14, 15, 16. 2 Cor. v. 7, 14, 15. Col. i. 27, 29. Jude, verfe 3. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8. Prov. xxiii. 23. Ifa. xxvi. 1, 4. lvii. 15. lxvi. 1, 2. Col. iii. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3. 2 Tim. i. 14. 1 Tim. vi. 11, 15. Rev. iii. 11. Afts xxi. 13, 14. Phil. ii. 12, 13. iv. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

As to the reasons why we and all Chriftians, or indeed men wherever the book of God comes and is known, ought thus to feek, through grace, to know, believe, and obey the Son of God, or the mind and will of God as revealed in the word of his grace, that is, the truth as in Jefus, and that alone, they are many and great, and of the very laft moment, and of eternal importance to us and all mankind. As that this is the revealed and declared will, and alfo the pofitive and exprefs command of God and of his Chrift, which is at once reason enough for any thing, to all the world. John v. 39. xiii. 17. xiv. 15. xv. 14. Matt. vii. 21. 1 Theff. iv. 1, 2, 3. 1 John iii. 23. Rom. xvi. 25, 26, 27.

It is the higheft wifdom, and the beft intereft of any man living, to know, believe on, love, and obey the Son of God, the one lawgiver in his church, and to the univerfe; and a perfect lawgiver, and the fole Lord of the confciences of all men: Infomuch, that it is an act of native obedience and due allegiance all fuch of mankind as profefs his name and religion owe to him, to acknowledge him as fuch. Afts iii. 22, 23. Pfal. cx. 1, 2, 3. ii. 6. Phil. ii. 5, 11. John xvii. 3. James iv. 12.

And as the life of faith, promife, and prayer; or the life of fubjection to, dependence upon, and obedience and conformity to Chrift and the gofpel, is the only happy life in the world: So the pleafure and advantage of the truly religious life fhould engage one and all of us, through grace, to feek thus to know and believe on, love and obey the Son of God; and fo to have it as our fixed principle, our constant and governing aim, to pleafe God, and be approven of him through Chrift, whether in life or death, time or eternity. For true peace, refined pleafure, folid blifs, and lafting hap-

pineness, are really peculiar to religion and the ways of God; yea, these are all his own: Whereas all others of mankind, God himself assures us, the way of peace or true happiness they know not. But amidst all their sinful or sensual pleasures they have only a face of pleasure, but an heart of pain, of real pain. Prov. iii. 13, 18. Psal. cxix. 165. Matt. v. 1, 12. Rom. iii. 17. Isa xlvi. 22. Psal. ix. 17. The grace of God, as laid in Jesus Christ, and in the great and precious promises of the gospel, which are all in him, yea, and amen to the glory of God, to enable all that come to God in his Son, in good earnest, for every good word and work, should also thus engage us all to live, and walk, and please God. Col. i. 19. John i. 14, 16. 2 Cor. i. 20. xii. 9. Jer. xxxi. 39, 40. John xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44. Matt. vii. 7, 11. Luke xi. 9, 13. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

The glory of God, the honour of a Redeemer, and the praise of free grace, should engage us all to this; for this is the great and last end of all that God hath either said or done by his Son. And therefore it ever ought to be our great and last end in all we do. 1 Cor. x. 31. Eph. i. 6, 7. Prov. xvi. 4. Moreover, not only our comfort in life, but our hope in death, and our happiness to eternity itself, should excite and animate one and all of us to seek, above all things, through grace, thus to win Christ, and be found in him; in real union, and of one spirit with him; and so to be blessed with the spirit and power of his religion. And thus we shall be heirs of God, and of glory, through Christ; yea, joint heirs with Christ. Phil. iii. 8, 9, 10, 14. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 4, 7.

To conclude, in as few words as possible: As the religion of the Son of God is such as has been said, and wholly love, peace, truth, holiness, or obedience and conformity to Christ and the gospel; and makes all such as are blessed with it, in its spirit and power, one in interest, spirit, and affection, in some measure, with the Son of God; and is also designed of God himself to make all Christians one with one another in the Lord: So it is equally evident there can be but one such religion for all the world. For there is but one God and Father in Christ, one Lord and Saviour, the
holy

holy Jesus, one spirit or sanctifier, the Holy Ghost; one faith, one baptism, one covenant of grace, one rule of faith and manners for all Christians, the word of God, one hope, one happiness, one heaven, awaiting all real Saints or sincere Christians beyond death and the grave; yea, there is one light, one life, one love in Christ for all Saints indeed, and only one way either to holiness or happiness here or hereafter, for any sinner of mankind, that is only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, of the pure love, rich, free, and sovereign grace, or the tender mercy of God as in Christ. John xiv. 6. vi. 37, 44, 63. Acts iv. 12, 32. Rom. viii. 9, 14. 1 Cor. iii. 11. vi. 17. Eph. iv. 1, 7. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 4, 7. 1 John iv. 7, 16. 1 Cor. xiii. at large.

And, therefore, as the all of the religion of Jesus, or of true godliness, is just God likeness and Christ-likeness, all pretences, in any of mankind, to the name and religion of the Son of God, without the spirit and power of his religion, are both displeasing to God, and unprofitable to men. John iv. 23, 24. Rom. ii. 28, 29. viii. 9, 14. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Gal. vi. 15, 16. Col. iii. 11. Matt. vii. 21.

And it is equally absurd, impious, and irreligious, for any man, or set of men whatever, so much as to pretend to the spirit of God, unless the word, the grace, the light, the love and life, the power and spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, reigns and rules in their hearts and souls, and over their lips and lives, through his imputed righteousness, unto eternal life and everlasting salvation, by Jesus Christ, and by him alone.

For as the whole word of God was given by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost, whatever is contrary to God's word, in any of mankind, can never possibly proceed from his spirit. Rom. viii. 9, 14. v. 21. 2 Cor. v. 17. iii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. ii. 5, 8, 10. Matt. vii. 21. John i. 18. xiii. 17. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Tit. ii. 11. xiv. 3, 4, 7. Gal. i. 6, 7, 8, 9. vi. 16.

May

May the God of love, and of all grace and truth, for
Christ's sake, bless us, and all mankind, Jew and Gentile,
all over the world, with the spirit and power of the religion
of Jesus. *Amen.*

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THE CONCLUSION;

WITH A FEW PAGES UPON MAGISTRACY, AS THE ORDINANCE OF GOD, FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND.

AS every Bible Principle, or truly christian doctrine or duty, thus stands clothed with divine light and evidence all over the holy scriptures; and love is not only the great, the leading, and the essential, but the universal, law in the kingdom of Christ; insomuch, that every law in his kingdom is just one continued law of love. Matt. xxii. 37, 40. John xiv. 15. xv. 14. xiii. 35. Rom. xiii. 10. Gal. v. 14. 1 John iv. 7, 16.

For it is evident, as the light of the sun at noon, that none but God himself, God as in Christ, who is love itself, grace and truth itself, and who is possessed of every divine perfection and excellency, could ever possibly have favoured the world with such a divine book as the holy scriptures, so full of infinite and unerring wisdom, rich grace, eternal truth, and tender mercy towards the sons of men; wrote in every line with such grand scope and uniform design, as the glory of God, and the good of mankind, in time and to eternity, clothed with such divine majesty, consent, and harmony in all its parts, so ancient, that any other book is modern, and of yesterday to it, all pure and holy, and possessed of such power and influence in the hearts and souls, and over the lips and lives of men, whenever accompanied with the grace and spirit of Christ, as is peculiar to it, of all books in the world, and also so abundantly confirmed both by prophecies and miracles, especially concerning Christ and the gospel. Exod. xx. 1. Isa. viii. 20. Psa. xix. 7, 11. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Heb. iv. 12. 2 Pet. i. 21. Gal. vi. 16. Acts iv. 27, 28, 33. xviii. 28. xxvi. 18.

Thus

Thus as the Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man in one person, the prophet, the priest, and king of his church, the sole head both of influences to, and of government in and over her, the glorious medium of intercourse between heaven and earth, the great and the living representative both of God and his will to the world, and head also over all things to his church; being possessed of all power and authority, might, and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth, ruling every moment by law and love, by his word, grace, and spirit, in all believing hearts and souls, and over the lips and lives, and with the same infinite ease ever over and amidst all his and his people's enemies, as has been fully shewn already. John i. 1, 3, 14, 16, 18. iii. 34. xiv. 6. vi. 37. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20. Acts iii. 22, 23. Psa. ii. 6. cx. 1, 4. Jas. iv. 12. Eph. i. 19, 23. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10. Phil. ii. 5, 11. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6.

So as God, if not as God, man, mediator, he has graciously instituted and appointed magistracy, or civil government in the world, as well as a gospel ministry in his church, to continue to the end of time. Prov. viii. 14, 16. Rom. xiii. 1, 7. Matt. xxii. 21, 28. xviii. 20. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 31. Eph. iv. 11, 13. 2 Cor. iv. 7. John i. 3. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10.

And the church of Christ, as the city of the living God, and the world of mankind, are two very separate and distinct societies. The one purely civil, and the other only religious. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is both God and man in one person, and possessed of all power and authority, might and dominion, whether in heaven or in earth, having all the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him bodily, is the one law-giver in his church, and indeed to the universe; and he is a perfect law-giver, and the sole Lord of the consciences of all men.

And it is an act of native obedience and due allegiance, all such of mankind as profess Christ and Christianity, owe to him to acknowledge him as such. Jas. iv. 12. Matt. xxiii. 8. xi. 28. xviii. 20. John v. 22. viii. 50. Rom. xiv.

xiv. 4. Eph. i. 19, 23. Col. i. 15, 19. ii. 9, 10. Phil. ii. 5, 11. Isa. xxxiii. 22. Jer. x. 10. Rev. xvii. 4. xix. 16.

And therefore no king or subject, lord or gentleman, pope or prelate, upon the face of God's earth, or set of men in the world, can have the least shadow of a divine right to lord it over the consciences of men, or in any sort or shape oppress God's heritage, as by patronage and presentation; or make the least new law in the kingdom of the Son of God. Matt. xv. 9. xx. 25, 28. xxiii. 8, 11. xxviii. 18. Mark vii. 7. x. 42, 43. Col. ii. 8, 10, 19, 22. Luke xxii. 24, 27. 1 Pet. v. 3. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Cor. x. 15.

"My kingdom is not of this world," says the Lord Christ himself, while here in person in the flesh. John xviii. 36.

And, therefore, whosoever of mankind encroach in the least degree upon Christ's prerogative royal, as the sole head of his church, or even as head over all things to his church, without God's mercy in Christ, must one day answer the Lord Judge of all the world for it. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. xiv. 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12. Eccl. xii. 14.

Thus as all the government ever established by divine appointment, so much as in the visible church of God, was a Theocracy, or with equal propriety a Christocracy, or government under God or his Christ, viz. according to the rule of his word, as the one Lawgiver in his church, and one Master of saints, and sole Lord of the consciences of all men; and not according to the rules and dictates, the wisdom and policy, the maxims or rudiments of this world. James iv. 12. Matt. xxiii. 8, 12. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7. x. 42, 45. Luke xx. 24, 27. Rom. xiv. 4. Acts iii. 22, 23. Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, 20, 22.

So with respect to the world of mankind, ever since the domestic or first family government in Adam, there has only been three sorts of government in the world among men: Monarchy, or a government by one man; Aristocracy, or by the grandees and nobles of a people or nation; or Democracy, by the people themselves.

An absolute Monarchy, where a kingdom or empire was at the will of one man, both as to person and property, never was a good government: Witness the four grand monarchies, the Assyrian or Babylonian, the Persian, Grecian, or Roman; with all the absolute monarchs that ever existed in the world. And indeed this is an office God never appointed; and no man living is fit for it. God himself, who is an all-perfect Being, and the only necessary and self-existent Being in the universe, can only have his will as a law. And it is altogether incompetent to a creature, as such, whether man or angel, who can only subsist a moment by the will and power of his Creator. Job xxiii. 13, 14. Psal. xxxiii. 10, 11. Eccles. iii. 14. vii. 14. Isa. xlv. 9, 10. Acts xvii. 28. Job iv. 18, 19. And therefore all absolute monarchy is altogether absurd.

Aristocracy, or a government by the grandees and nobles of any people or nation, never was a good government: Witness the States of Greece, or wherever this form of government took place.

Democracy, or a government by the people alone, always issued in riot and confusion, and soon wrought its own ruin, unless prudently wrought up into a regular commonwealth, or republic; as Rome, Sparta, Athens, or Lacedemon; and even then always at last issued in absolute monarchy; that is, pure tyranny, or abject slavery, as every body knows all these at last did. And therefore the best of all these three is and must be best; where pure law, and perfect love to God and man, reigns from the throne to the footstool, according to God's ordinance; and there is a full and fair, a just and an impartial representation of the people, with all their real interests.

The king is their father, their civil father: Their rulers peace, and their exactors righteousness; men fearing God, and hating covetousness. Magistrates are a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, according to the word of God: And every individual member of a kingdom or nation is a good and faithful citizen, or member of civil society in the world, as every man living ought to be.

Thus

Thus a kingly government, or limited mixt monarchy, is the appointment, it would appear, of the Son of God in person. Prov. viii. 14, 15, 16. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom : I am understanding ; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice : By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. Rom. xiii. 1, 7. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3. And it is certain, by his own example, he sanctions magistracy as a divine ordinance, when he commands to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Matt. xxii. 21. Mark xii. 17. Luke xx. 25.

Thus, I say, in as few words as possible, a kingly government, or limited mixed monarchy, where pure law and perfect love, with integrity, impartial justice, and equity, according to the law of God and heaven, and all the essential rights of human nature, uniformly actuate, and duly animate all the different parts, both of the constitution and administration ; as king and people, rulers, and all such as are ruled, it would appear evident from holy scripture, and all the kings of God's own appointment in the word, is the very best civil government in the world, and both free and safe to any commonwealth or republic, that is, or ever was in the earth. For any part of such a constitution and government is both a check upon and balance to the whole. Here also the nature of things, and the whole experience and history of mankind in all ages, give in their voice : Let the world bear witness. One thing is certain, wherever we have God's ordinance for any thing, that is and must be best for all the world. For God is infinitely wiser than men, and as good and gracious as wise.

Thus granting, as nature, reason, revelation, and indeed the all of religion does, that the essential, the supreme, and indeed unanswerable right to rule or govern in any kingdom or collective body of people in the world, is in the nation as such ; that is, in the whole nation, as a regular, collective, orderly body ; or in men as men ; and especially as Christians in all christian countries : Yet if, by all the republican principles in the earth, a good king, with lords and commons, or proper rulers and magistrates, at best is

an imperfect every thing; how shall any republic in the world, in danger of being enslaved every day by one of its most popular members, be a perfect any thing? And besides, if more fools than wise men get into a convention or an assembly, which may be easily got in any country, they will be equally sure to go wrong. Let ancient Rome and Greece bear witness, with the world in general.

Another thing is equally certain upon these principles, by the whole New Testament, and indeed every law of Christ, viz. that any christian congregation in the visible church of God has an undoubted right to chuse their own minister, or pastor in the Lord. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6, 7. Eph. iv. 11, 13. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 30. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Tit. i. 5. Acts vi. chap. at large. xiv. 23. xxvi. 18.

And so no man, or set of men, in the world, can ever possibly have the least shadow of a divine right to lord it over the consciences of men or Christians. For the Lord Jesus Christ is the one lawgiver from heaven, and sole Lord of the consciences of all men; and so the one and only Lord spiritual. And therefore a spiritual Lordship applied to any other person upon the face of God's earth is an absurdity in terms, a pure oddity, and real deformity, either in the church or world. James iv. 12. Rom. xiv. 4, 9, 20. Acts iv. 19. v. 29. 1 Cor. vii. 23. Matt. xxiii. 8, 12. 2 Cor. i. 24. Matt. xv. 9. Mark vii. 7. Col. ii. 8, 10, 20, 23.

Thus, with respect to magistracy as God's ordinance, God graciously promises to his church and people, that their kings shall be nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers to them; their rulers peace, and their exactors righteousness; their judges and magistrates men fearing God, and hating covetousness; their rulers and governors, in general a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. Isa xlix. 22, 23. lx. 17, 18. Numb. xi. 12. Exod. xviii. 21. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. Psal. cxxii. 5. Prov. viii. 14, 15, 16. Rom. xiii. 1, 7. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3. Matt. xxii. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17. Deut. xvi. 18, 20. Ezra vii. 25, 27.

Thus also all men, in every nation under heaven where the gospel of the grace of God comes and is known, are com-
manded

manded to fear God and honour the king, and to submit themselves to every just and good ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors as sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well: For this great and good reason, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty; and also, as they have opportunity, to do good to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.

Yea, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, to think on these things, to practise and to do them, both as men and Christians; and the God of peace shall be with you. Yea, the Son of God himself, while here in person in the flesh, enjoins it upon all men and Christians over the world. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17. 2 Kings xi. 17. 2 Chron. ii. 11. Prov. viii. 14, 16. xxiv. 21. Eccl. viii. 4, 5. Rom. xiii. 1, 7. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3. Psal. cxxii. 5. Gal. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 8, 9. Matt. vii. 12. xxii. 21. Deut. xvi. 18, 20. Ezra vii. 25, 27.

But as Christianity is the only thing in all the universe of God that ever did or will perfect humanity; before we can promise much upon men as members of civil society in the world, we must have them good men; or, in other words, real saints, or sincere Christians; that is, men blest with the spirit and power of the religion of Jesus, which is all over love, peace, and truth; holiness, or obedience and conformity to Christ and the gospel; or just God-likeness and Christ-likeness. And which religion of the Son of God is the firmest band, and the only sure and certain basis and foundation of all civil society and connections in the world. And it is easy to demonstrate from the sacred page, yea, both from the church and world, that the greatest saint or best Christian, allowing for the different natural tempers and dispositions, talents and circumstances of mankind, is, and must be otherwise, the best every thing; king or subject, minister or man, whether in the church or state, or member of society, civil or religious.

Thus

Thus, I say, it is evident as a bible principle, evident in a manner as the light of the sun at noon, that a good king, (for which Britain has now long had great and good reason to bless God and be thankful) with proper rulers and magistrates, and a full and fair, a just and an impartial representation of the people, with all their real interests, is the very best civil government in the world, and both free and safe to any republic whatever.—May this form of government, God willing and assisting for Christ's sake, with all due improvement and proper amendment, be the happiness of Britain and the world, while the sun shines. AMEN.

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